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ABSTRACT

Developed by the Oregon Elementary English Project, this curriculum unit on stories is intended for grades one and two. The purpose of the unit is to build in students a foundation for enjoyment of literature. The suggested questions or exercises that deal with the stories are limited to simple comprehension or discussion questions; no attempt is made at formal literary study. Traditional versions rather than simplified adaptations were chosen since it was felt that students have a listening vocabulary which permits them to understand the original versions. The nineteen stories are accompanied by suggested introductory activities, dramatic activities, composition activities, comprehension activities, and stated objectives. Also included are drawings for the overhead projector which can be used with one of the selections. (HOD)

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Levels A - B

OREGON ELEMENTARY ENGLISH PROJECT

STORIES

Volume 3

Department of English
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

CS 200 973

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Levels A - B

STORIES

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THE LITERATURE STRAND

What follows is an extended discussion of the rationale and goals of the experimental curriculum in literature developed by the Oregon Elementary English Project. The levels covered by the curriculum are grades one through six. Grades one and two make one natural grouping, with no attempt made to identify the materials of the curriculum by grade level. So, too, with grades three and four, and grades five and six. Let us deal with each group separately.

PART ONE: POEMS AND STORIES, LEVELS A AND B (GRADES ONE AND TWO)

It is a bit misleading to speak of a "curriculum in literature" for the first and second grades, if one takes the word to mean a program of formal study. We are advocating no such program here; we use the word simply to indicate that the work of the first and second grades is the beginning of what will become a program of formal study as students move through the grades on into junior and senior high school. What we hope to achieve in the primary grades is the building of a foundation of enjoyment of literature--the preparation of fertile ground. The selections we offer in this anthology were picked primarily because students should enjoy them. Any of the suggested questions or exercises that deal with the selection itself are limited to simple comprehension or discussion questions; no attempt is made at any sort of formal literary study. We expect that the teacher will normally have to read most of the selections to the children because of their limited ability to read by themselves at this age.

The selections include both poems and stories. The stories were chosen with an eye to the work of later grades, and here a word or two of explanation might be in order. Certain folk and fairy tales have become part of the common pool of shared experience of speakers and writers of the English language, and hence are a source of allusion and reference and recurring themes in much of the literature that students will be reading in later years. Indeed, such allusions and references to standard themes have a wider influence than the purely literary: a sociologist will speak of "the Cinderella myth" and its relationship to American culture; an anthropologist will refer to the recurring motif of the disguised hero in the folklore of different cultures. Such allusions as well as those that occur in the literature he will later study, will be meaningless to the student unless he is familiar with the stories and themes to which they refer. The narratives we include here are the beginning of students' acquisition of that common body of "reservoir" literature which has become a sort of intellectual shorthand.

It will be noticed that we are using the traditional versions of these stories, rather than simplified adaptations or the prettified, Walt-Disneyized versions that abound. Students have a listening vocabulary that is large enough to permit them to understand these original versions. It is not necessary that they understand every word in a story before they can enjoy it; we learn new words by hearing (or seeing) them often enough so that we gradually come to understand their meaning from their use. And since it is the stories in their original form to which all allusions and references are made, we are using them instead of the anemic variants of the Walt Disney type. Let's face it: the wicked wolf ate the first two little pigs and then got boiled and eaten himself; another wicked wolf really ate Red Riding Hood's grandmother; and the wicked witch in "Hansel and Gretel" was indeed burned up in her own oven. That's the way the stories go. To pretty them up is a tasteless exercise in false delicacy.

Of the poetry there is not so much need to speak. At this grade level there is not the same body of reservoir poetry that there is of prose. Such poetry is either of a greater sophistication and complexity, which students will not meet until much later in the grades; or else it is verse of the Mother Goose sort, which most of them presumably have already encountered.

The main purpose with the poems, as with the stories, is that students should enjoy the selections. We want them to approach the later grades familiar with verse and fond of it, and less inclined to adopt the pose that poetry is somehow sissy stuff.

One final remark. The selections included here are by no means intended to be students' only literary fare. This is simply one item on the menu. It is an important one, and will become more so in their study of literature in later grades. But to claim a central importance for such a small slice of the total pie available in the rich banquet of children's literature would be an arrogance we do not intend. We merely suggest that this be folded in along with a great deal more in the language arts program.

PART TWO: LEVELS C AND D (GRADES THREE AND FOUR)

The readings and exercises we have provided for grades three and four are designed to build on the work of grades one and two, and to be another step towards a goal which will not be reached until many years later in the student's academic career. That goal is the development, not of a literary critic, a professor of English, a college English major, or even necessarily of a person who lists "reading good literature" among his hobbies in the high school yearbook; rather, it is the development of a person who has been exposed to good literature, has been taught to recognize and understand the function of some of those qualities of literature which can be discussed objectively, and has developed a respect for literature as a valid medium of artistic expression and a tolerance for those to whom literary study is a serious concern. The "curriculum" for grades one and two begins the exposure process, and that for grades three and four continues it; the formal training comes later.

The principal criterion for choosing the selections for these grades has been enjoyment. Most students should enjoy most of these selections; other children have. Indeed, so important is this criterion that it should override any other consideration. In treating any of these selections, if a class doesn't enjoy it, it should be dropped. Force-feeding doesn't work. But besides the criterion of enjoyment, several other considerations have governed our selection of titles. Since these considerations form the rationale for including literature in the students' language arts program at all, it might be well to explore some of them. We hope it will help explain what this "curriculum" for grades three and four is designed to accomplish.

These considerations can be grouped under what is generally, and loosely, referred to as "our cultural heritage." This rather pompous and--in an increasingly heterogeneous culture--vague phrase is merely one way of stating that literature, as central to humane studies, is one of the primary means by which we identify ourselves to ourselves and relate ourselves to others. Teachers are familiar with the ritual of identification nearly every student goes through, usually on his notebook cover: "John Jones, 201 Main Street, Mill City, Iowa, United States, North America, Northern Hemisphere, Earth, Solar System, Galaxy, Universe." The child is identifying himself at a particular point in time and space. Literature serves an analogous function. It provides us, as one writer has said, with "a superb library of human situations, an endless repertory of encounters." If we take "cultural heritage" in its broadest sense--the individual's discovery of his relationship to the universal human condition--then literature provides us with those encounters and situations through which we begin the process of defining and identifying ourselves. Grades three and four are not too early to begin that process.

There are other aspects of the idea of "cultural heritage" which justify the teaching of literature--and literature of the sort included here--in the students' language arts program. Let us mention them briefly.

The universal human condition seems to include a similar response to similar stimuli no matter what part of the globe we look at. Thus we find in every culture the same sorts of literature--fables, myths, folk and fairy tales, and the like. All cultures have a mythology, a series of stories attempting to explain natural phenomena in understandable terms, an attempt to explain the natural, non-human world in human terms. We include here myths from the Classical period, from Norse mythology, and from different African and American Indian mythologies. Fables are a standard literary form--still going strong in Pogo--used to describe certain aspects of human behavior. We include the Aesop fables which are most central to our literary tradition, and use for comparison a fable from Turkey.

Similarly, folk tales and fairy tales illustrate universal human concerns, wishes, dreams, and predicaments. We have included familiar and unfamiliar stories from several countries. For example, students should enjoy recognizing the familiar Cinderella story in its Chinese version. Similarly, they should recognize the recurring motif of the encounter with magical wee folk in stories from Ireland and Russia as well as the more familiar ones from Grimm.

Since our students are, after all, living in an English-speaking country, and since they will be reading in later years literature written in English, the majority of the selections in this curriculum are those which are central to the traditions of that literature. Hence the prominence given to Classical and Norse mythology, upon which so much literary allusion and reference depends. Hence too our inclusion of legends and hero tales which are a necessary part of every child's reservoir of literary knowledge--Robin Hood, William Tell, Aladdin, Paul Bunyan, Sindbad, etc. Since there is not enough time or space to include everything, what we have given in these books is what seems to us essential for students' later reading and study of literature. The more this core can be supplemented with readings from as many different sources as possible, the better.

In brief, then, the selections included in these books are designed to enrich students' cultural heritage--as human beings sharing with all other human beings certain responses and certain ways of explaining the world and human nature to ourselves; and as speakers and readers of English beginning to build up a necessary reservoir of familiarity with literature written in the English language.

Let us repeat what we said at the start. The main goal of these readings for the third and fourth grade years is that students enjoy the selections for their own sake. Force-feeding, or the dictation of concepts and connections, will destroy the whole purpose of the program. As we have said, the principal function of the curriculum on these levels is exposure, not formal training.

There are seven volumes in the third and fourth grade literature curriculum. Six of them are for distribution to the students, one for each child. They are attractively bound and illustrated, and we hope they will stimulate many students to independent reading. There is a volume of fables, one of Norse mythology, one of Greek mythology, one of African and Indian mythology, one of folk and fairy tales, and one of verse. In the teacher's edition of each of these volumes are suggestions for questions and activities which may be followed if they seem to work, or which may be supplemented with ones of the teacher's own devising.

We have not written any detailed lesson plans for these selections, or specified any particular sequence in which they should be presented. Generally speaking, however, we do not recommend grinding through them one right after the other. In other words, instead of teaching all the fables one after the other, the teacher should spot them throughout the year in convenient clusters, and use the suggested questions and activities as seems appropriate.

The volumes of mythology are written on the assumption that the teacher will start with the Greek, go on to the Norse, and end with the African and Indian. We suggest that this sequence be tried first. Each collection repeats certain themes, i.e., How the world was made, How the seasons came to be, etc. A good class should be able to see these recurring themes in cultures from all times and places.

The folk and fairy tales are collected under three main thematic groupings, Encounter With Wee Folk, The Foolish Use of Wishes, and Unlikely Successes. There are four stories under each grouping, and again it is up to the teacher and the class to determine how much is done with the idea of repeated motifs.

The other volume is distributed to the teacher only. It is a collection of longer stories than those mentioned above--hero tales and legends of Robin Hood, Paul Bunyan, etc. We suggest that these be used during story hour to read to the students, since the length and vocabulary will probably be too advanced for many students to read by themselves.

The volume of verse, like all the others, is primarily for pleasure. We have included in the teacher's copy some suggestions for teaching. If a class enjoys it, they might try to write some poems of their own, or try their own illustrations of some of the poems.

What we have supplied, then, is a collection of stories and poems which we hope students will enjoy reading or having read to them, with some suggestions on how they might be presented. If the children enjoy them, and remember some of them--in other words, if they begin to learn to like literature--that is sufficient. Anything above that is gravy.

PART THREE: LEVELS V-VI (GRADES FIVE AND SIX)

The literature curriculum for grades five and six is an attempt to introduce an added dimension to the curriculum in English in the upper elementary grades. That added dimension is the study of some of the formal aspects of literature.

It is a supplement to, not a substitute for, existing curricula.

The basic tactic to be followed is to build on enjoyment. In other words, if students like a selection, and are interested in what they are doing, the teacher can slip in a little study of some of the concepts introduced below. The teacher should not force things, not over-analyze.

The curriculum is divided into two main sections, Poetry and Narrative (the latter including both prose and poetry). Since the formal elements of poetry are more easily extracted for discussions, the main emphasis falls on poetry. It should probably be taught before narrative. The central thesis of the poetry curriculum is that every poetic device is used by students in their normal discourse. The central thesis of the narrative section is not so easily capsuled. (See the discussion below.)

The teacher should not be alarmed by the bulk. It is, after all, mimeographed material on one side of the sheet only. It is also two years' worth of material. The teacher need not master it all at once. Each unit is of a manageable size.

The discussion of the central concept of each unit is background information, and is not meant to be passed on verbatim to students. It is much more mature and detailed than students can possibly absorb.

It is our hope that this curriculum, if it is flexibly and imaginatively taught, will increase students' informed enjoyment of literature, both now and in later years.

Rationale

The curriculum we have developed herein is, frankly, "cognitive." By cognitive we mean a curriculum which will teach a student to identify and discuss those elements in a literary structure which are susceptible of a more or less objective description. Those formal elements of a work of literature which can be identified and discussed are certainly not all there is to literature, but they are a large part of it. Without an understanding of basic critical concepts and terminology, any response to a work remains subjective and impressionistic.

The curriculum presented here is designed to build on, rather than supplant, the basic emotional appeal of literature. We assume that the teacher has engaged the students' interest in the work, and has encouraged the sort of response and enjoyment which is fundamental.

We can reduce the assumptions which underlie this program to a few declarative sentences. First, the emotional appeal of literature is probably its most important element, but it is precisely this element which cannot be taught. This is the old truism that "you cannot teach enjoyment." Or, putting it another way, "You cannot teach literature, you can only teach about it."

Second, students have minds as well as emotions, and an intellectual understanding of some of the elements of literary structures can increase the enjoyment of the work. One of the higher abilities which distinguishes man from beast is his ability to intellectualize, to objectify. To fail to provide an opportunity for the exercise of that faculty is to fail to help the "whole child" develop.

Third, the teaching of the formal elements of literary structures should always be an outgrowth of reading for pleasure. As we mentioned above, the concepts introduced in this curriculum are designed to build on, rather than replace, reading for enjoyment. We realize that of the total language arts program, literature forms a fairly small part. Further, we would suggest strongly that of the literary selections read in any given year, a fairly small part of them be given any formal treatment of analysis. Nothing kills pleasure in reading faster than over-analysis.

To achieve the purposes outlined above, we have devised a series of brief lesson plans, each centered around some literary concept--rhyme, or simile, or allusion, or the like. Each concept is treated in three selections ranging from the simple to the more complex. In this way the teacher should be able to adjust the choice of selections to the level of ability of the individual class or student.

Poetry: Mostly Lyric

Since the elements of poetry are in many ways more easy to deal with than those of narrative, we have begun with poetry. While we have imposed no rigid sequence on the order in which the concepts should be introduced, in general it is probably best to move from the more concrete to the more thematic or abstract. Thus, for instance, the idea of rhyme should probably precede the treatment of meter, or the idea of imagery precede that of metaphor.

We have broken down poetic concepts into four main categories, each a little more complex than the one that precedes it. As we mentioned, each concept in each category is treated on three levels of difficulty.

The first category is the one with the most obvious elements. Poetry is a system of sounds and rhythms, and the lessons introduce the basic rhymes and meters. In this category the students move from a study of rhyme and rhyme scheme through study of stanza patterns to a treatment of metrics and simple scansion.* Since children have used rhyme and rhythm from their Mother Goose days, and since they can sing every TV jingle they ever heard, it seems a good idea to start them where they already are.

The second category treats poetry as a system of words. Again, the category begins with the most elementary level, the concept of diction or word choice, with the related questions of "hard" or "soft" diction and denotation and connotation. The sequence continues through words used for imagery to groups of words used for complex imagery or comparison such as simile and metaphor.

The next category deals with what can be called the "situations" of poetry. Here we introduce the idea of the speaker in the poem and the situation or dramatic context in which the poem is being said. This begins, on a very elementary level, the introduction to the idea of the dramatis persona or the assumed identity of the speaker of a poem, and the very important idea that the speaker is quite probably not the author.

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*The unit on metrics should be regarded as supplementary. It may be used or not, or it may be saved for later in the year.

Further, for an understanding of many poems, it is important to know what the events were that triggered the utterance, and where the speaker is in relation to the events mentioned in the poem. Such considerations are invaluable in interpreting the tone or attitude of the writer, and understanding his purpose. Finally, this category includes a consideration of the rhetorical patterns of poetry, i.e., what ideas are expressed and in what order.

The last category is in many ways quite similar to the one just mentioned. It deals with the questions of tone, of attitude, of the author's point of view towards his subject, of the whole area of values. In this category the students will concern themselves with such things as satire, irony, and such indirect modes.

A note on the lesson plans. As we have said, all the selections have been chosen for their appeal to elementary school children. The title or text of the work, and the literary concept it can be used to illustrate, appear on the first page of the unit. Following that, we include a discussion of the work as a whole, based on what children might find enjoyable in it. Following that, we discuss the literary concept illustrated by the work, with suggested discussion questions, alternate selections, and suggested activities and follow up. This organization makes available to the teacher a collection of good children's literature which has proven successful in the classroom, with the option of moving from there to a discussion of a particular literary concept, should it seem desirable. In other words, the curriculum provides an anthology of good children's literature, arranged in an order of increasing sophistication, and supplemented--no supplanted--by a sequential introduction to the elements of literary techniques and analysis.

Narrative: Prose and Poetry

Elementary school children read a large assortment of imaginative narrative, both prose and poetry. They read folk tales, fables, myths, fantasy and science fiction, realistic fiction, as well as ballads and other narrative poems such as "The Cremation of Sam McGee" or "The Highwayman." Quite a conglomerate assortment. How does one impose any order (of a literary sort) on all that?

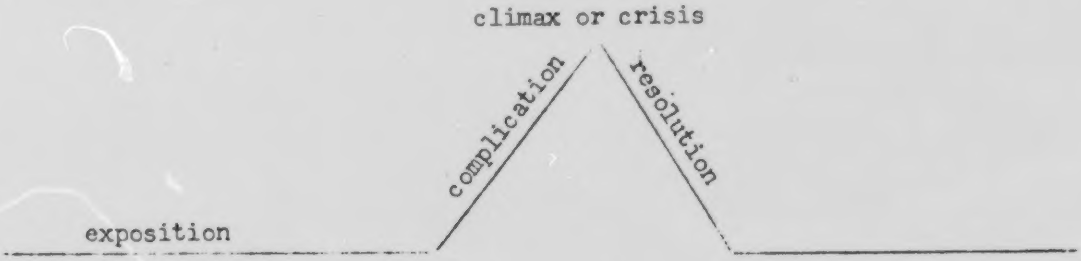
There are any number of ways. The approach we recommend below, just one of several, is designed to give young students some understanding of those elements which are basic to all narrative, and which indeed seem part of our instinctive way of looking at the world.

The idea mentioned in the previous paragraph, that there are elements "basic to all narrative," is worth some further development. If the statement is correct, then any narrative can be treated in the same way, whether it be in prose or verse. One of the most noxious misapprehensions in the mind of the average student is that there is a difference between prose and poetry based on its subject matter. The point we are trying to make is that the idea of "narrative" is more fundamental than the idea of "prose vs. poetry." It doesn't matter what form the narrative takes; what matters is that it is narrative. There is more in common between "Casey at the Bat" and Peter Rabbit than there is between "Casey" and, say, "Old Ironsides."

In their study of narrative, we want students to begin to be aware of those elements common to all narrative, whatever the form it may take.

Narrative, then, is a way of saying something that is more fundamental than the ideas of prose or verse. Narrative, or "story," is such a basic element in the history of human ideas, that it is difficult to speculate on its origin. For as long as man has been a social animal he has told stories as a way of ordering and explaining his environment and his universe. The study of narrative, then, is a very human act, one that has interested man since he began to think and to imagine.

What we are talking about here is the formal structure of a narrative. The standard narrative can be broken down into its basic elements, which should be accessible to the average elementary school child. What the children should begin to see, hopefully, is the fundamental narrative structure of all story. It is basically a pyramid.



The exposition tells us who is who, where they are, and what the situation is. The complication gives us the terms of the conflict. The climax or crisis gives us the clash of the opposing forces. The resolution gives us the movement to a new state of affairs in which the forces involved in the conflict are at least temporarily at rest.

To illustrate, let us take "Casey at the Bat," which is one of the selections in the unit on Narrative. It is treated more fully in the unit, but we can use it here briefly. The first stanza gives us a rapid exposition: bottom of the ninth inning, score 4-2, two out. The complication is quite extended, as we see two men get on, and then Casey advance to the plate and get two called strikes. The climax comes with the third pitch, and then the story moves to its brief resolution in the final stanza: "There is no joy in Mudville; mighty Casey has struck out."

(A note on terminology. Such terms as "exposition," "complication," "resolution," and so on can be confusing to students. If the teacher thinks it better, terms can be used drawn from the children's existing vocabulary. "Information" or "explanation," for instance, could be possible substitutes for "exposition." Similarly, some word like "opposition" could be substituted for "complication," and something like "solution" could be substituted for "resolution." The point is not the teaching of standard terminology, but the idea behind it.)

Within this basic pattern, which can be diagrammed on the board and discussed in terms of the dynamics of any narrative, there are all sorts of variations. The emphasis can fall on the conflict, as in "Casey at the Bat." There can be flashbacks, in which time sequence is distorted. There can be stories which concentrate on motive (Poe's "The Tell Tale Heart"). But with all the possible variations and emphasis, any narrative can be discussed in terms of its relation to this basic narrative form.

Building on such considerations, it should be possible to have students consider more subjective and evaluative questions, the same sort of questions with which the more advanced sections of the poetry sequence are concerned. What is the author's point of view? What is the tone of the story? What values are being explored and what attitude is being expressed? The sequence here, as in the poetry section, moves from simple to more complex and subjective considerations.

Again, as with the poetry, the lesson plans offer a selection of tested narratives, with a general discussion of each of a number of selected stories as a whole, indicating those points that might most profitably be discussed. In addition, special mention is made of some particular aspects of narrative form which the teacher may wish to pursue with the class. Again, also, the lessons are arranged in a planned sequence, but it is up to the teacher to determine where to begin and to what extent to follow the program.

A word of caution. With narrative, even more than with poetry, overemphasis on formal analysis would be a great mistake. The patterns of narrative are broader and vaguer, at this stage, than the patterns of poetry, and not so readily held in the mind or abstracted from the text. (Perhaps the main reason for this is that narrative tends to be longer than lyric poetry.) At any rate, it is important to remember that the concepts we suggest here are not to be regarded as a substitute for reading for enjoyment, that they are a supplement, not a replacement, an optional added dimension to pleasure, not a sterile catechism.

Some Practical Considerations

The units are arranged in an arbitrary order, the rationale for which is explained on page 42 above. As we have mentioned, the material was written with a hypothetical ungraded fifth and sixth grade class in mind. The teacher will want to adapt these materials to his or her particular classroom. It is clear that some students will not be able or willing to go as far along the road as others. It will be up to the teacher to determine how far to travel.

There is no need to follow the sequence we have laid out. If the teacher thinks another sequence will serve better, it should be tried. But generally speaking, a horizontal approach should be more effective than a vertical one, i.e., concepts from several categories should be treated in a cross section rather than following one to its end at the cost of excluding another. Such a procedure will soon allow for a good deal of cross reference and discussion of more than one concept in any given selection. In other words, a poem each from the lessons on imagery, diction, allusion, and irony, for example, would probably do better than all the poems in any one of those units.

The teacher must decide the point at which to plug in the material, and the rate at which to move. It is important for the teacher to keep in mind the ultimate goal--one which will not be realized for many years: the development of sensitive, informed, and eager readers of literature.

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Metrics, Scansion
Rhyme Scheme: Stanza
Diction (Word Choice); Denotation and Connotation; Onomatopoeia
Imagery
Speaker
Dramatic Situation
Simile
Metaphor I
Metaphor II
Allusion
Idea Patterns
Point of View
Hyperbole-Irony
Symbol
The Whole Poem

B. Narrative (Prose and Verse)

"The Cat Who Walked by Himself" - Rudyard Kipling
"The Story of Keesh" - Jack London
"The Springfield Fox" - Ernest Thompson-Seton
"A Man Who Had No Eyes" - MacKinlay Kantor
"A Dangerous Guy Indeed" - Damon Runyon
"The Old Demon" - Pearl Buck
"Night Drive" - Will F. Jenkins
"Locomotive 38, the Ojibway" - William Saroyan
"Siward Digri--The Earl of Northumberland" - Earl Craig
"The Cremation of Sam McGee" - Robert W. Service
"The Highwayman" - Alfred Noyes
"The Witch of Willowby Wood" - Rowena Bennett
"Casey at the Bat" - Ernest Thayer
"Ode to Billy Joe" - Bobbie Gentry

HANSEL AND GRETEL

"Hansel and Gretel" from Tales from Grimm, translated by Wanda Gag.
New York: Coward-McCann Publishers.

Suggested Activities

Introduction:

What does it mean to have courage, to be courageous? Can you think of someone who was brave, who had courage? (Allow time for discussion. If no one has examples, or if there is a lack of understanding, have several examples to give.)

Today's story is about two courageous children, a boy and a girl. Listen and find out in what ways they were brave.

The Story:

(Read the title. Read the story for enjoyment, without further comment.)

The Action:

Who had courage in the story? In what way was Hansel brave? Did Gretel show any courage? What would you have done, if you had been in the story?

(Have the children make hand-puppets (paper sack, stick puppets, etc.) of the characters in the play and reenact the story (or make up their own stories).)

Further Action:

(Children can make clay figures of the characters, construction paper witch's house, etc.

A table can be set up by children as a model of the story, building the woodcutter's house, witch's house, woods, birds, animals, and characters.

A flannel board story of HANSEL AND GRETEL can be cut out and used by children.

Children can draw the characters, etc., and magnets can be glued to their backs--to make a magnetic board story.

Small silhouettes can be cut out by the children and the story can be acted out by the teacher or children on the overhead projector.)

Follow up:

Make the book available for the children to use. Make an audio-tape of the story or have the record available.

Drama

Objectives:

To play out a sequence of events.

To become involved in the various moods of a character.

Activities:

(The following are suggestions for sidecoaching the children as they act out various parts of the story, after having heard the story. Music can help set a suspenseful and mysterious mood for the first three parts. For example, a selection from Malcolm Arnold's English Dances, or the first part of Stravinsky's Firebird Suite, or a selection from Holst's The Planets.)

1, Each one of you imagine you are Hansel, sneaking quietly out of your bed, creeping to the door, and going outside to gather the white pebbles.

When you have filled your pockets with pebbles, carefully go back in the house and crawl in bed.

2. Now it is morning and you are walking in the woods. You must be very careful not to let your stepmother see you dropping the pebbles. You turn back toward the house every once in a while, pretending to look at something while you drop the pebbles.

(As they walk, you can talk to them as if you are the cross stepmother Address your comments to particular children and some of them will probably respond verbally as Hansel would. You can say, for example, "You, Hansel, why do you keep turning around?" "Hansel, you are too slow, come along now." End this sequence by telling them, still in the stepmother's voice, "Sit down and wait here while your father and I go chop some wood.")

3. Now let's go to the part of the story where Hansel and Gretel think they will find their way home by following the breadcrumb path. (They can work in pairs or alone.) The moon has come up and Hansel and Gretel get up and begin looking for the bread crumbs. Where are they? They must be over there instead. Look around. Oh, now, what will you do? (Describe their walk through the forest, how they trip over stumps, get scratched, hear scary noises, etc., and at last sit down and fall asleep.)

4. (You can use "Morning Mood" from the Peer Gynt Suite by Grieg for this part.) Now it is morning. You stretch and hear the beautiful song of a bird. It seems to be saying, "Follow me. Follow me." Keep watching the bird.

Why, look ahead of you! There's a beautiful little house. It looks like it's made of things to eat! You run to it. Sure enough, you can eat it. Break off a piece. Oh, you have been so hungry. You take a big bite. Suddenly you stop. (Music off) Listen. You hear a voice: Nibble, nibble nottage, Who's nibbling at my cottage?" (Continue describing the old woman. You can play the role, if you wish, using a "honey voice" and inviting them in to eat and tucking them in bed.)

5. (You can continue playing the role of the old witch to all the Hansels and Gretels, putting the boys in the goose-coops, ordering the Gretels about, checking the Hansels for fatness, etc. For the climax, go up to one particular Gretel, who you know will respond, and tell her to stick her head in the oven to see if it is hot enough.

Or, you can divide the children into groups of three and let them play out that part of the story, discussing the action and how they would feel if they were really going to be eaten by a witch. All the groups can play out the action simultaneously. The satisfaction comes from actually playing it, rather than watching someone else do it.

Triumphant music at the end would be appropriate, while you describe the birds dropping the jewels down for the children. Again, a selection from Malcolm Arnold's English Dances or the last part of The Firebird Suite would be appropriate, or some other selection you enjoy.)

Composition

Objectives:

This lesson should help the students

to gain skill in developing a story;

to think imaginatively.

With all those jewels from the witch's cottage the woodcutter and his children became very rich. Let students pretend they are Hansel or Gretel and have them think how they would spend some of their wealth. Ask them to think about what they would buy and who they would try to make happy. Then have them write or tell a story about spending their great wealth.

To help with story construction you might have students plan and act out one or two stories as a whole class before children work on their individual stories. Use pieces of paper or small rocks for the jewels and pass them out to a few volunteers who have a story in mind. Plan what the children will do with the jewels, what other characters will be in the story, how many scenes will be needed and so on. Then choose other students to participate and act out the story. Discuss whether their acting tells the whole story.

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

Once there was a family with three sons. The mother and father loved the two eldest sons very much but they were ashamed of the youngest son. "He is so dumb," the mother wept. "He is stupid," the father cried. And so they named him "Dummling" or little dumb one. Dummling was given all the ugly tasks. He fed the pigs and cleaned out the chicken house. The elder sons laughed at Dummling and went into the forest to hunt or to chop wood.

One day the eldest son sang to himself as he chopped wood. He was looking forward to stopping work for lunch because his mother had wrapped two juicy meat pies in a clean white napkin and given him a bottle of wine. As he sang he heard another song and from behind a tree appeared a little, bent man.

"I am hungry," he sang,
"I have nothing to eat.
Share with me, please,
A bit of your meat."

The eldest son just laughed and kept on chopping. "Why should I share with you? I've been working all morning and I'm hungrier than you!" Just as the eldest son said this, the ax sprang out of his hands and cut him in the head. He ran for home to have it bandaged. The little, bent man picked up the lunch and ate every bit of it.

The next day the second eldest son got ready to go into the forest to chop wood. "Be careful, my son," his mother said, hugging him and giving him a lunch of meat pies and wine. As soon as the second son got to the forest and began to chop wood, he too heard a song, and the little, bent man appeared.

"I am hungry," he sang,
"I have nothing to eat.
Share with me, please,
A bit of your meat."

"Get you of here, you old beggar," the second son cried. "Why should I share with you?" No sooner had he said this than the ax slipped and cut his leg, and he had to limp home to be bandaged. The little, bent man picked up the lunch and ate it all up.

There were many tears in the cottage. "How will we live through the cold winter with no wood to burn?" the mother wept.

"Let me go," said Dummling. "I can cut wood for this winter."

"You fool," said his father, "you will cut off both your head and your foot, but what does it matter? Go if you wish."

The next morning while everyone was still in bed Dummling found for himself a crust of dry bread and a bottle of sour beer and took the ax into the woods. He had not worked long when the little, bent man appeared.

"I am hungry," he sang,
"I have nothing to eat.
Share with me, please,
A bit of your meat."

"I have no meat," said Dummling, "but what I have is yours to share."

The little, bent man sat down by Dummling, and as he pulled out the bread it became a hot, rich meat pie. The beer turned to a bottle of the best wine. "You are a good boy," the little, bent man said. "I'm going to do you a favor. Cut down this tree. Hidden in its root is a special gift for you."

The man vanished and Dummling did as he said. When the tree fell, he found nestled in the root a beautiful golden goose. When Dummling picked her up she nibbled at his ear with her bright, shining bill. He stroked her feathers and found that they were of pure gold! "What a beautiful goose you are," he said, cuddling her close.

"You are a good boy," said the goose. "Let's travel throughout the world. When you need gold, just pull out one of my feathers."

The two set out and everywhere they went people stopped to admire the goose. One night as Dummling was sleeping in an inn, the innkeeper's eldest daughter crept silently up to his bed. "Just one feather," she whispered, and she reached out to pluck a feather. As soon as she touched the goose, however, she was stuck fast. As she stood by the bed the second eldest daughter came into the room. "Keep away, sister," she warned but the second daughter refused. "Do you want to have all the golden feathers for yourself?" she cried. She slapped her sister, but as soon as she did she found she could not pull her hand away. She too was stuck. Then the youngest sister crept into the room, and before long she too was stuck to her middle sister, who was stuck to her eldest sister, who was stuck to the golden goose who nestled in Dummling's arms.

The next morning Dummling and the goose set out again. Dummling noticed the three girls but he didn't pay any attention to them. The group stumbled and tripped along, the girls scolding and yelling. As they crossed the town square the mayor came out. "Young women," he called, "this is most unladylike. Girls should not chase after a young man in my town."

And he grabbed at the youngest sister. But he found that he too was stuck fast. Dummling marched on and soon he was at the end of town in front of the mayor's fine house. Now the mayor's daughter was getting married this day, and she ran down the steps in her long, white bridal gown crying, "Father, Father, stop! The wedding is almost ready to begin." As she reached out and touched her father, she too was stuck fast. Through town after town they went, the three sisters crying, the mayor crying out to Dummling to stop, the bride weeping, and Dummling, not caring, skipping along with his beautiful golden goose.

One bright sunny morning the group came to a beautiful castle. In this castle lived the gloomiest, grumpiest princess in all the world. All the seventeen years of her life she had never smiled. Her father had promised that the man who could make her laugh would be her husband and would inherit his kingdom. On this morning the princess sat in her tower looking out, and when she saw Dummling and the golden goose and the five stumbling, crying, shouting, tripping figures she began to laugh. She couldn't stop laughing. She laughed so hard that the crown fell from her head and the buttons popped off her dress.

"You shall be my son," the king called to Dummling, "for you have made my daughter laugh and be happy." The princess kissed Dummling. The golden goose suddenly vanished, no one knows where. And the three sisters and the mayor and the bride ran back home as fast as ever they could.

Introduction:

1. Are any of you the youngest in your family?
2. If so, what are some things that your older brothers and sisters are trusted to do that you aren't allowed to do? Do you ever feel this is unfair? Why or why not?

This story is about a youngest son who is finally allowed to do something only his older brothers have done. Let's see how he does it.

Comprehension:

1. Why did Dummling's family treat him the way they did?
2. What happened to the two older brothers? Who do you think the little bent man might have been?
3. What is the special gift Dummling receives?
4. Why do people try to pluck the goose's feathers? What happens to all of them?
5. Do you like the way the story ends?

Drama

Objective:

To dramatize a humorous scene from the story.

Dramatize:

The children will enjoy acting out the scene beginning when the girls sneak up to pluck a feather from the goose and on through to the end.

Questions to bring out the feelings of the characters and what they did will help the children visualize the action. For example, what did the eldest daughter think when she tried to get a feather and her hand stuck? What did she do? What do you suppose she said to her sister when she came in? Etc.

You can narrate while the children act it out, or they can act it out on their own.

WHY THE EVERGREEN TREES KEEP THEIR LEAVES IN WINTER

Winter was on its way. The dull, gray sky was marked with flocks of birds, heading south to lands of warmth where food could be found. Far below the sky, one bird dragged his broken wing and chirped sadly as his friends flew out of sight. He knew if he didn't find a warm place to spend the winter, he would die. He looked around him, and across the meadow he could see a warm, thick forest. He would have to spend the winter there.

Painfully, the little bird pulled his broken wing across the earth until he came to a slender, white-barked birch tree. "O beautiful tree," he said, "as you can see, I can't fly. Will you cover me with your branches and keep me warm for the winter?"

The birch tree bent back and waved the bird away. "I don't want you," the tree said. "The birds that live here are bad enough, always pecking and tearing at my leaves. Winter is the one season I can really look beautiful. I'm not going to let you spoil that!"

The little bird's wing was aching from the cold but he had to try another tree. "Perhaps," he thought, "the strong oak will help me. Surely he won't find a little bird like me any trouble."

"Great oak tree," the bird said, "you are the mightiest of the trees in the forest. Won't you help me? Let me stay in your warmth until winter passes and my friends return."

"Go away," the oak rumbled. "I have nothing to share with you. If I let you sit on a branch you'd want to eat my acorns too. The squirrels steal enough from me. Get away!"

The little bird bent his head sadly. As he thought what to do next, he heard someone else crying and he followed the sound. "It is the willow," he said to himself. "Maybe we could help each other." He hopped to where the willow stood. "Willow," he said, "don't weep. I know how it feels to be sad and lonely. Let me live in your branches this winter and I'll sing your sadness away."

"I don't want your songs," sighed the willow. "I like to be sad. Why should I help anyone else out, and especially a bird I don't know!"

The little bird turned away. He was shivering and his broken wing hurt more and more. He tried to fly but each time he fell back to the cold earth. Suddenly, he heard a kind voice call to him. It was the spruce tree. "Little bird, let me help you. I have a good, warm branch where you may rest and grow strong."

"Will you really help me?" the little bird asked, wiping away a tear with the tip of his wing.

"We must help each other," said the spruce. "Winters are long and we would die without helping each other. The tall, strong pine helps keep me warm, and he will help you too."

"That's true," said the pine, "and I have some tasty pine-nuts you can eat. They're left over from spring planting and should help you grow strong."

"I have wonderful silver-blue berries," called a little juniper. "Come visit me anytime you like."

"You are all so kind," said the little bird. "I will sing to you and help you pass the long months until winter is gone." He hopped into the warm spruce and snuggled against its trunk.

Now, the birch and the oak and the willow had all been listening and they shook their branches in disgust. "I'm glad we don't live in that part of the forest," they said. "How disgusting," said the willow. "Can you imagine letting a strange bird live in your branches?" "It would ruin our looks," said the birch. "Birds steal things," growled the oak.

Night fell and at the edge of the forest the North Wind and the Frost King began to play. "Shall I blow your frost everywhere?" asked the Wind. "No," said the King, "you have seen which trees have been kind to the little lame bird. Let them keep their leaves all year round. As for the birch, the willow, and the oak--strip them. Let them feel what it is to shiver as your cold breath touches their backs!"

And so it was been every winter since this time long ago. The pine, the spruce, and the juniper are rewarded for their kindness. They are ever green.

Act: For a moment, imagine you are the little bird with the broken wing. Get into position now. Your friends and family have all flown away. When the music starts, imagine that you are going through the forest asking the trees to help you, but none of them do. (Sad, nostalgic music will help set the mood. Malcolm Arnold's English Dances, Number 3, would be a good choice. Allow the children to act the part of the bird for a few moments, then continue.)

You feel so sad, you just don't know what you'll do. You feel kind of shivery inside. Suddenly you hear a voice beside you. A spruce tree is calling to you. What's he saying? Why, he says you can live on his branches! (Change music. You can use English Dances again, this time Number 1.) Oh, how good you feel! And the pine tree says he'll keep the wind from making you too cold! And the juniper has said you can have some berries. It'll be a lovely winter after all!

Plan and Act: You can stop after the above playing or continue. Choose children to be various trees in the forest. There can be several of the "villian" trees, but only one each of the spruce, pine, and juniper. Ask them how they might move their branches to let the little bird know he cannot live with them. Each should decide exactly what his tree is like.

Choose someone to be the bird. The bird can go around to all the trees except the evergreens. When he finally gives up, the spruce tree speaks up.

Some of the children will respond verbally as the trees, others may just shake their branches to say "No" to the bird. The three evergreens should be able to speak out, however.

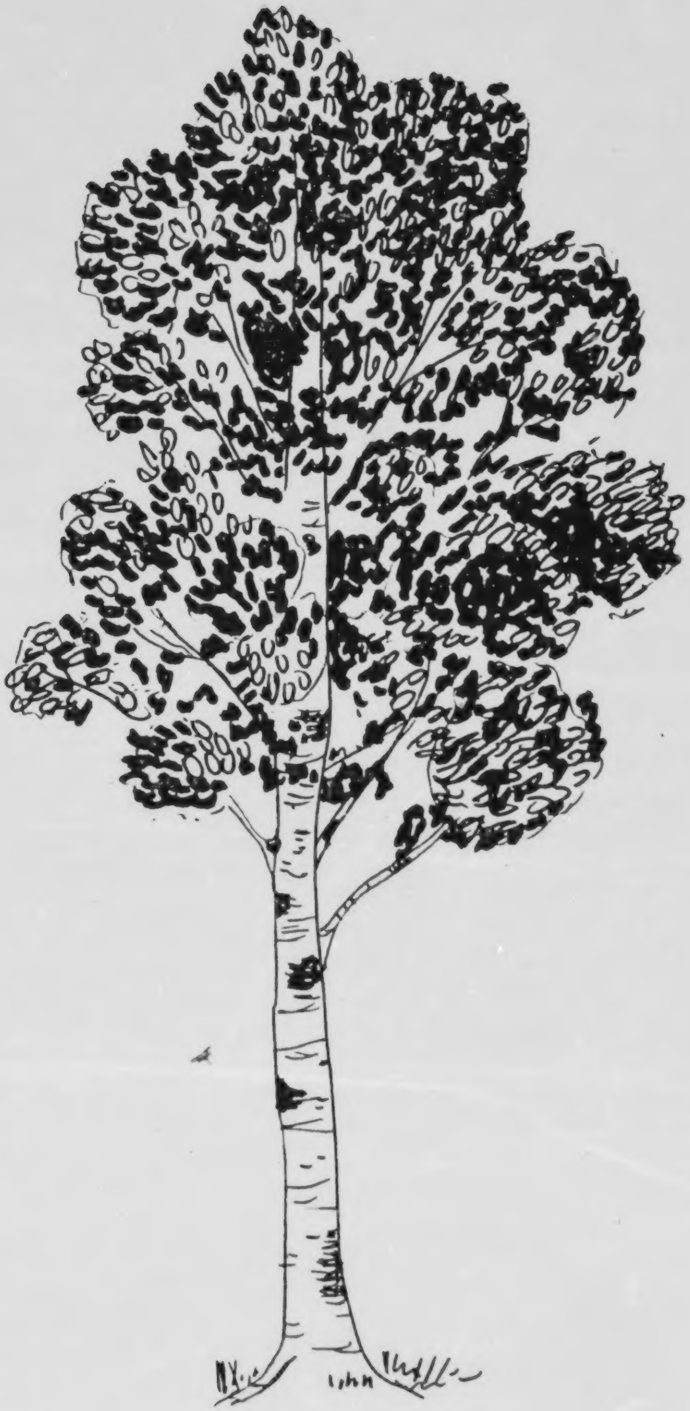
You can play the music again and sidecoach occasionally to indicate how the bird feels when the tree has said no, etc.)

Conclude: (After the evergreens have offered their help, sidecoach something to the effect that night comes, the bird has a nice warm home. But during the night, something happens. The cold north wind comes and touches the leaves of every tree that said "No" to the little bird. Their leaves all fall to the ground.)

Composition

Let's make up a myth explaining how the trees get their leaves back every summer. Maybe the trees said they were sorry, or maybe the bird asked the frost king not to punish them too much. (Try to get them to give you description and dialogue.)

JUNIPER

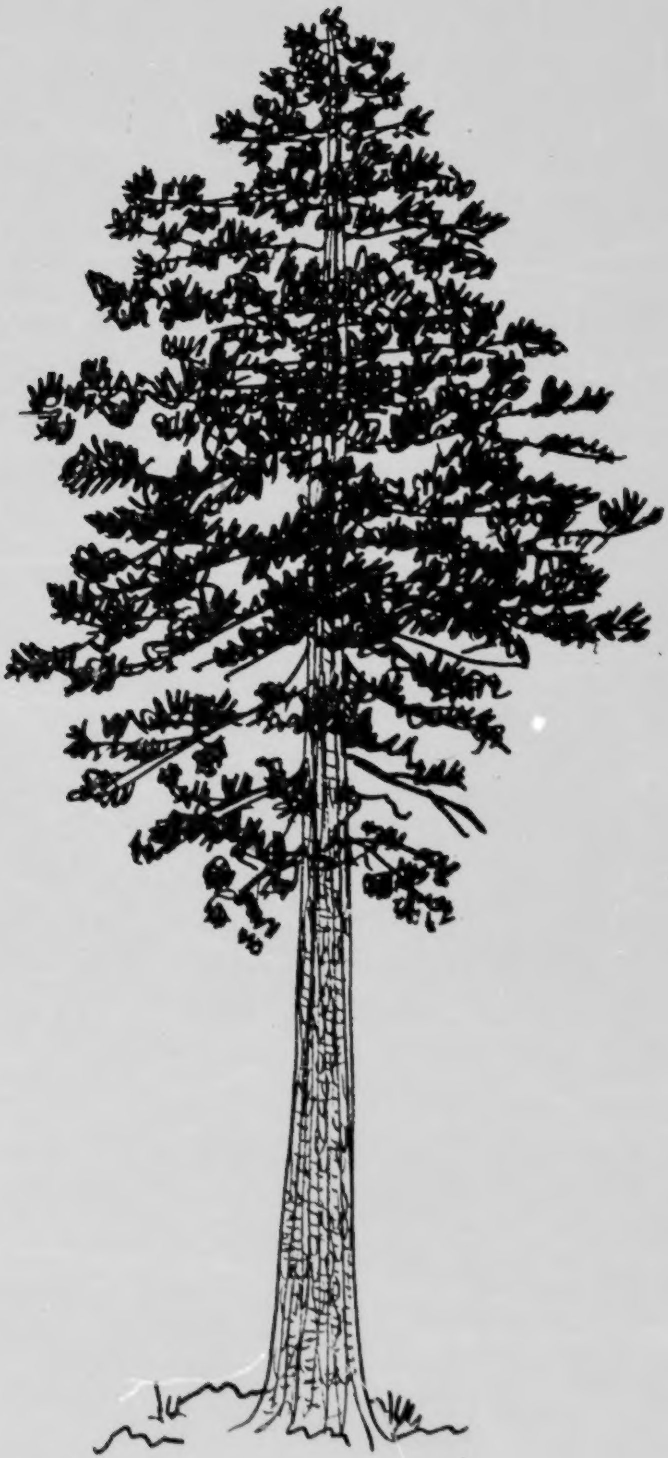


BIRCH

SPRUCE

WILLOW

OAK



PINE

"The Magic Ring" by E. M. Almedingen. From Russian Folk and Fairy Tales. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963.

Introduction:

1. Here is a story about a boy who spent a hundred silver pieces on an ugly old dog, and another hundred on an old cat, and still another hundred on a plain, simple ring. Pretty stupid? Don't be too sure.

2. Do any of you know any stories about a poor boy who marries a princess? How about a poor girl who marries a prince?

3. What would you do if you had a magic ring that would give you anything you wanted?

Comprehension:

1. What did Boris buy with his money? His mother thought he was being silly; did you?

2. What could the ring do for Boris? What did he use it for?

3. How did Pal and Mate help Boris? Do you think he knew this when he bought them?

4. What was the Princess like? Did you like her? How did she learn her lesson?

THE PANCAKE

Once long ago a large family lived in a small cottage at the edge of a forest. The family was always hungry. There was a tall, thin Father and a short, thin Mother and seven small, thin children. The entire family gathered around the fire where the mother was heating a great black griddle. In a bowl she put freshly ground flour and sweet milk and honey and an egg and beat and beat and beat. Then she took her wooden spoon and scooped the batter onto the hot greased griddle. All the family watched as the batter spread and grew and puffed itself into a fat, round pancake! Quickly the mother took a handful of huckleberries and gave Pancake a face--two for eyes one for nose, and five for a large smiling mouth.

"Hurry, Mother," cried the seven small, thin children. "Hurry and turn the pancake so we can eat it!" The short, thin Mother laughed, "Perhaps Pancake will turn himself!" When Pancake heard this he knew what he must do. He was afraid of the large thin family; he was afraid of being eaten. He puffed and puffed until he was light enough to bounce up from the griddle but just as he stood on the edge ready to jump he flopped forward, his huckleberry eyes touching his huckleberry mouth. "This will never do," he muttered, "I must lie on the griddle a while longer until I am strong enough to stand." And he did, and when he was toasted brown on both sides he leaped from the griddle and rolled across the floor and through the door and bounced, bounced, bounced down the steps. "Stop!" cried the tall, thin Father. "Come back!" cried the short, thin Mother. "We're hungry!" cried the seven small, thin children and they all began chasing Pancake.

"You can't catch me," called Pancake, and his huckleberry smile grew bigger. Pancake rolled and rolled, faster and faster, and the farther he rolled from the village the more he smiled. Suddenly he heard a rustle in the bushes and a large rat jumped in front of him. "Stop, Pancake," the Rat said. "I have many good things to eat in my den. I want to have you too!"

But Pancake said, "I've run away from the tall, thin Father and the short thin Mother and the seven small, thin children. I'll not be trapped by you!" And Pancake rolled on deeper into the forest. He bumped over tree roots and into mushrooms. He listened to the forest noises, "Who-o-o is it?" called the owl. "It is Pancake," Pancake answered, "and no one can catch me!" Pancake rolled on, up and down and around a bend in the path. There he met an old woman, hobbling along and carrying a basket. "You must be tired, little Pancake," she said, "Hop into my basket. I'd love to carry you home to eat with fruit and cream."

"No, no, old woman! Do you think I who have run away from the tall, thin Father and the short, thin Mother and seven small, thin children and Rat would be taken in by you? I shall not hop into your basket."

Pancake rolled on. It was beginning to get dark and as he rolled he felt tired, so he rolled onto a moss bed and lay very still. "Pancake, " a voice quacked, "you are tired and there is a large pond ahead of you. Let me push you across. It wouldn't be hard. I'd nibble at you with my beak."

"You won't eat me, Duck, " said Pancake. "I'll roll around the pond and on and on and on, and no one will catch me. I've run away from the tall, thin Father and the short, thin Mother and the seven small, thin children and Rat and the Old Woman and I'll run away from you too!"

When Pancake came to the pond he was very tired. As he stopped by the edge of the water he heard a grunting noise. "Uh, Pancake, " the voice said. "Uh, hop on my snout and I'll swim and carry you across the pond. Surely you don't think I'd eat you! I've had delicious flowers and berries and roots all day long. When we get to the other side of the pond, we'll travel together and be friends."

Pancake thought and thought. He rolled from one side to the other, back and forth, back and forth. "All right, Pig, " he said at last. "I've run away from the tall, thin Father and the short, thin Mother, and the seven small, thin children and Rat and Old Woman and Duck. Now, I'll run away with you." And he hopped on Pig's snout.

Pig swam into the pond. Pancake sat on his snout, looking over the water-lilies and the cat-tails Suddenly, there was a great noise behind them. Pancake looked back and there on the bank were the tall, thin Father and the short, thin Mother, and Rat and the Old Woman and Duck and they were all shouting, "Stop!"

"All right, " said Pig. "I'll stop." And he tilted his head up and opened his mouth, and poor Pancake rolled in and down and down and down. And that was the end of Pancake, and it's the end of this story, too.

Introduction:

1. Today you will hear a story about a pancake. It is a very special one: it can hear and see and talk.

2. Have you ever thought about how a pancake might feel about being eaten? Suppose you were a pancake, what would you do if you knew you were going to be gobbled up? Listen, and you'll find out how this pancake felt.

3. See if you can remember in order all the different people and animals who wanted to eat the pancake.

Comprehension:

1. Were you happy or sad when the pancake ran away from the seven hungry children? Whose side were you on?

2. Whom did Pancake meet on his travels? Can you list them all in order? What did they all want to do with him?

3. Who finally eats Pancake? How was Pancake tricked?

Composition

Whom do you think Pancake might have met on his travels besides the ones mentioned in the story? A wolf? A tiger? How about an Eagle? Pick someone Pancake might have met, and tell the story about it. Be sure to use conversation. Maybe several of you could get together and try to write it out.

BRIER ROSE

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who had no children, and this they were very unhappy about. When at last the queen had a little girl, the king was overjoyed, and decided to hold a great feast. So he invited not only his relations, friends, and neighbors, but also all the fairies, so that they might be kind and good to his little daughter.

Now there were thirteen fairies in his kingdom, and he had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, so he had to leave one of the fairies without an invitation. The rest came, and after the feast was over they gave all their best gifts to the little princess: one gave her goodness, another beauty, another riches, and so on till she had all that was good in the world.

When eleven had finished blessing her, the thirteenth, who had not been invited and was very angry, came in and decided to take her revenge. So she cried out, "The king's daughter shall in her fifteenth year be wounded by a spindle, and fall down dead."

Then the twelfth, who had not yet given her gift, came forward and said that the bad wish must come true, but that she could soften it, and that the king's daughter should not die, but fall asleep for a hundred years.

But the king hoped to save his dear child and ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and destroyed. All the fairies' gifts in the meantime came true, for the princess was so beautiful, and well behaved, and pleasant, and wise that everyone who knew her loved her.

Now it happened that on the very day she was fifteen years old the king and queen were not at home, and she was left alone in the palace. So she roved about by herself and looked at all the rooms and chambers till at last she came to an old tower, to which there was a narrow staircase ending with a little door. In the door there was a golden key, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there sat an old lady spinning away very busily.

"Why, how now, good mother," said the princess, "what are you doing?"

"Spinning," said the old lady, and nodded her head.

"How prettily that little thing turns round!" said the princess, and took the spindle and began to spin. But scarcely had she touched it before the evil wish came true, she pricked her finger, and fell down lifeless on the ground.

However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep, and the king and the queen, who just then came home, and all their court, fell asleep too; and the horses slept in the stables, and dogs in the courtyard, the pigeons on the housetop and the flies on the walls.

Even the fire on the hearth stopped blazing and went to sleep; and the meat that was roasting stood still; and the cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen boy by the hair to give him a box on the ear for something he had done wrong, let him go, and both fell asleep; and so everything stood still, and slept soundly.

A large hedge of thorns soon grew round the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker till at last the whole palace was surrounded and hid, so that not even the roof or the chimneys could be seen.

But people heard of the beautiful sleeping Brier Rose (for so was the king's daughter called); so that from time to time several kings' sons came and tried to break through the hedge of thorns into the palace. This they could never do, for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them as if with hands, and they could never break through.

After many, many years there came a king's son into that land, and an old man told him the story of the hedge of thorns, and how a beautiful palace stood behind it, in which was a wondrous princess, called Brier Rose, asleep with all her court. He told, too, how he had heard from his grandfather that many, many princes had come, and had tried to break through the hedge, but had always failed.

Then the young prince said, "All this shall not frighten me. I will go and see Brier Rose." The old man tried to talk him out of it, but he insisted on going.

Now that very day the hundred years were completed; and as the prince came to the hedge, he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he passed with ease, and they closed after him as firm as ever. He came at last to the palace, and there in the courtyard lay the dogs asleep, and the horses in the stables, and on the roof sat the pigeons fast asleep with their heads under their wings. When he came into the palace, the flies slept on the walls, and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand as if she would beat the boy, and the maid sat with a black chicken in her hand ready to pluck the feathers off it.

Then he went on still further, and all was so still that he could hear every breath he drew. At last he came to the old tower and opened the door of the little room in which Brier Rose was.

There she lay fast asleep, and looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her, and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke and smiled upon him.

Then they went out together, and soon the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and they gazed on one another with great wonder. And the horses got up and shook themselves, and the dogs jumped about and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings and looked about and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings and looked about and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls buzzed away; the fire in the kitchen blazed up and cooked the dinner, and the roast meat turned round again; the cook gave the boy the box on his ear so that he cried out, and the maid went on plucking the chicken.

And then the prince and Brier Rose were married, and they lived happily together all their lives long.

Objectives:

To acquaint students with part of their literary heritage;

To encourage students to recall the main events of the story in sequence.

Introduction:

1. Do any of you have a baby brother or sister?

2. When he was born, did someone give a "baby shower?" Who knows what "baby showers" are for? What kind of gifts might a baby be given?

3. Vocabulary: spindle (a long pin that people used to wind thread on when they were spinning with a spinning-wheel)

This story is about a baby born to a king and queen who had had no children for years and years, and who had been very sad until their daughter was born. They were so happy then that they invited twelve very special guests to a party for their new baby. These guests were fairies, and each one had a wonderful gift for the little princess. But there was one fairy they had not invited. She was angry and came anyway. Her gift brought with it trouble and unhappiness.

Comprehension:

1. Why did the king and queen only invite twelve fairies to their party?

2. What gift did the thirteenth fairy give? Why did she give such a bad present?

3. What gift did the twelfth fairy give?

4. What happened to the princess when she was fifteen years old?

5. How was Brier Rose saved?

HOW THE ROBIN'S BREAST BECAME RED

Once, long ago, in the North country there was only one fire. An old man and his son huddled around it, guarding it day and night. If the fire went out they and all the other people in this cold land of snow would die. When night came they were very careful, listening for sounds, staring into the darkness. The people of the North country had a terrible enemy who wanted the North country all to himself. He wanted the people to freeze to death. He wanted to put out the fire.

One sad night the old father fell ill. "Now, my son," he said, "you alone must guard our fire. You must be strong and have courage."

The son was very grave, and many days and nights he stayed awake guarding the fire and trying to keep his old father warm. He grew more and more tired, and one night he fell asleep.

At once, out of the blackness of the night, appeared a great white bear. He scooped snow with his enormous paws and threw it onto the fire. With his wet feet he leaped onto the small flames that were left, stamping and snorting. "Now, you will die! The Northland will be mine again," he said. The boy woke but he was too weak to move and he began to cry softly. The bear, thinking that the fire was out, shook the snow from his thick white fur and disappeared once more.

Near the boy and the old father was the home of a small, gray robin. She had been afraid to help the boy while the great bear was near, but as soon as she saw him go away she flew down to the ashes of the fire and looked and listened. She cocked her head first one way, and then the other. Suddenly she heard a small "pop" and then she saw a tiny, live coal. She bent over the coal and fanned and fanned with her wings until the coal began to glow and a tiny flame appeared. She kept on beating her wings, and the flame grew, scorching her breast. She kept on beating until the fire was strong once more, and then she flew away. Whenever she landed a miracle happened. When she touched ground a fire began, and soon there was not just one fire but many fires all over the great North country. Their colors glowed on the snow and flashed into the sky. There were oranges and reds and pinks and yellows and blues. It was a beautiful sight but the old man and the young boy and all the other people of the North country thought that the most beautiful of all was the little gray robin who had burned her breast to save their lives. The bear hated the little robin but there were too many fires for him to put out. He slunk into his ice cave where he stayed most of the year, away from the fires and the people. And to this day, all robins have red breasts.

"How the Robin's Breast Became Red"

Objectives:

The questions encourage the students

to recall a series of events in order (story sequencing).

Introduction:

Long ago when people first began to live, they had no books, no radios, no TV's, or movies to tell them why the world we live in is like it is. These early people used their imaginations and made up some wonderful tales about how things came to be. This Indian story tells us why the robin has a red breast.

Comprehension:

1. Who guarded the fire?
2. Why did the white bear want the fire to go out?
3. How does the white bear get a chance to put out the fire?
4. Who saves the fire? How does the robin save it?
5. Why is the robin's breast red?

Drama

Objectives:

To allow the movement of the characters to reveal their strong feelings.

To identify with and experience the bravery and success of the protagonist.

Material:

Music can be used effectively during the playing of portions of this story. For the robin: The Firebird Suite, by Stravinsky--just before and during the firebird's entrance and dance. Or, a portion from Moussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, "The Great Gate of Kiev." For the bear: The Firebird Suite, a portion from the "Infernal Dance of King Kastchel." Or, Pictures at an Exhibition, a portion of "The Hut of Baba Yaga."

Introduce: Do you know what it means to be selfish? What is a selfish person like?

There is a story the Indians tell about someone who was so selfish that he wanted all of the Northland to himself. He was a white bear who wanted to get rid of all the people. Listen and we'll find out what happened.

Tell the story: (Tell it with special emphasis on the action of the bear jumping and rolling on the fire, and on the action of the bird searching so hard and frantically to find a spark and then gradually fanning it to a big flame.)

Plan: Why was the robin frightened when she saw what the bear was doing? Why didn't she try to stop him? What did she do when the bear went away? (Stress how hard she had to look and how carefully she had to fan the spark.)

Act: Each of you find a place to hide where you are watching the bear rolling and growling and stamping the fire out.

(You can choose one boy or girl to play the part of the bear if you want to. If necessary you can sidecoach his action to help him play the part ferociously. For example, "Ah, bear, the boy has fallen asleep. This is the chance you've been waiting for. Soon you will have the Northland all to yourself! Put that fire out! Smother the flames." Etc. Music will also contribute to the mood.

Before the playing begins, decide where the fire is and let it be a large enough area so all the birds won't converge on one small spot.

Continue sidecoaching for the birds. For example, "The bear has gone back to his cave. What will happen? All your friends will die if the bear takes over the Northland. What can you do? You must find a spark. Pick around in the ashes. See if you can find one. Look all over. There's one! Now if you can only make it burst into flame again." Etc. Again, music can help set the mood.)

Evaluate and Plan: How do you think the robin felt when the spark caught on fire? How did she feel after she had started fires for the people all over the Northland?

We had a very ferocious bear, didn't we. Why was the bear so glad the little boy went to sleep?

Act: Each one of you imagine that you are that bear for a minute. (Or, half the class can play at a time.) Decide where your fire is. Find a good place to watch. You see the boy is getting sleepy. I'll tell you when he is asleep. Then we'll see what you do.

Conclusion: (It is not necessary to enact the whole story, unless you have a strong desire to do so. The children have had a chance to play the most exciting parts of the story and usually they feel very satisfied with that.

It is wise to conclude the playing in some way, however. One way is to suggest that the little birds are so happy with what they were able to do, but they are also very tired from all that work. "Let's see how you fly back to your nests and settle down for a nice, long sleep." Allow them a minute to rest. Afterward you might discuss how the bear felt when he came out of his cave and saw all those fires.)

THE FAIRY

Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters. The elder was so much like her that whoever saw the daughter saw the mother. They were both so disagreeable and so proud that there was no living with them. The younger, who was the very picture of her father for sweetness of temper, was also one of the most beautiful girls ever seen. As people naturally love their own likeness, this mother loved her elder daughter, and at the same time hated the younger. She made her eat in the kitchen and work all the time.

Among other things, this unfortunate child had to go twice a day to get water more than a mile and a half from the house, and bring home a pitcherful of it. One day, as she was at the spring, there came to her a poor woman, who begged her for a drink.

"Oh, yes, with all my heart, Goody," said this pretty little girl. Rinsing the pitcher at once, she took some of the clearest water from the spring and gave it to her, holding up the pitcher all the while, that she might drink the easier.

The good woman having drunk, said to her:--

"You are so pretty, so good and courteous, that I cannot help giving you a gift." For this was a fairy, who had taken the form of a poor country-woman, to see how far the politeness and good manners of this pretty girl would go. "I will give you a gift," continued the fairy, "that, at every word you speak, there shall come out of your mouth either a flower or a jewel."

When this pretty girl returned, her mother scolded at her for staying so long at the fountain.

"I beg your pardon, mamma," said the poor girl, "for not hurrying faster."

And in speaking these words there came out of her mouth two roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds.

"What is it I see there?" said her mother, quite astonished. "I think pearls and diamonds come out of the girl's mouth! How happens this, my child?"

This was the first time she had ever called her "my child."

The girl told her everything, not without dropping out great numbers of diamonds.

"Truly," cried the mother, "I must send my own dear child thither. Fanny, look at what comes out of your sister's mouth when she speaks. Would you not be glad, my dear, to have the same gift? You have only to go and get water out of the spring, and when a poor woman asks you to let her drink, to give it to her very politely."

"I should like to see myself going to the spring to get water," said this ill-bred girl.

"I insist you shall go," said the mother, "and that instantly."

She went, but grumbled all the way, taking with her the best silver pitcher in the house.

She no sooner reached the spring than she saw coming out of the wood a magnificently dressed lady, who came up to her and asked to drink. This was the same fairy who had appeared to her sister, but she had now taken the air and dress of a princess, to see how far this girl's rudeness would go.

"Am I come hither," said the proud ill-bred girl, "to serve you with water, pray? I suppose this silver pitcher was brought purely for your ladyship, was it? However, you may drink out of it, if you like."

"You are scarcely polite," answered the fairy, without anger. "Well, then, since you are so disobliging, I give you for a gift that at every word you speak there shall come out of your mouth a snake or a toad."

As soon as her mother saw her coming, she cried out:--

"Well, daughter?"

"Well, mother?" answered the unhappy girl, throwing out of her mouth a snake and a toad.

"Oh, mercy!" cried the mother, "what is it I see? It is her sister who has caused all this, but she shall pay for it," and immediately she ran to beat her. The poor child fled away from her, and went to hide herself in the forest near by.

The King's son, who was returning from the hunt, met her, and seeing her so beautiful, asked her what she did there alone and why she cried.

"Alas! sir, my mother has turned me out of doors."

The King's son, who saw five or six pearls and as many diamonds come out of her mouth, asked her to tell him how that happened. She told him the whole story. The King's son fell in love with her, and, considering that such a gift was worth more than any marriage portion another bride could bring, took her to the palace of the King, his father, and there married her.

As for her sister, she made herself so much hated that her own mother turned her out of doors. The miserable girl, after wandering about and finding no one to take her in, went to a corner of the wood, and there died.

Introduction:

1. Have you ever wished you could punish someone who was rude and mean to you?
2. The fairy in this story finds a very clever way to punish a rude, mean girl.

Comprehension:

1. Which sister did you like most in the story? Why?
2. How did the fairy reward the good younger sister?
3. How did she punish the mean older sister?
4. Would you like to be rewarded in the way the younger sister was? Why or why not?
5. The younger sister marries a prince? What might happen to the elder sister? Where could she go?

THE THREE BILLY-GOATS GRUFF

Once upon a time there were three Billy-Goats who were to go up to the hillside to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was "Gruff."

On the way up was a bridge over a brook they had to cross; and under the bridge lived a great ugly Troll, with eyes as big as saucers, and a nose as long as a poker.

So first of all came the youngest Billy-Goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

"Trip, trap; trip, trap!" went the bridge.

"WHO'S THAT tripping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

"Oh! it is only I, the littlest Billy-Goat Gruff; and I'm going up to the hillside to make myself fat," said the Billy-Goat, with such a small voice.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up," said the Troll.

"Oh, no! pray don't take me. I'm too little, that I am," said the Billy-Goat; "wait a bit till the second Billy-Goat Gruff comes; he's much bigger."

"Well! be off with you," said the Troll.

A little while after came the second Billy-Goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

"Trip, Trap! Trip, Trap! Trip, Trap!" went the bridge.

"WHO'S THAT tripping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

"Oh! it's the second Billy-Goat Gruff, and I'm going up to the hillside to make myself fat," said the Billy-Goat, who hadn't such a small voice.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up," said the Troll.

"Oh, no! don't take me. Wait a little till the big Billy-Goat Gruff comes; he's much bigger."

"Very well! be off with you," said the Troll.

But just then up came the big Billy-Goat Gruff,

"TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP!" went the bridge, for the Billy-Goat was so heavy that the bridge creaked and groaned under him.

"WHO'S THAT tramping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

"IT'S ME! THE BIG BILLY GOAT GRUFF," said the Billy-Goat, who had an ugly hoarse voice of his own.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up," roared the Troll.

"Well, come along! I've got two spears,
And I'll poke your eyeballs out at your ears;
I've got besides two big hard stones,
And I'll crush you to bits, body and bones."

That was what the big Billy-Goat said; and so he flew at the Troll and poked his eyes out with his horns, and crushed him to bits, body and bones, and tossed him out into the brook, and after that he went up to the hillside. There the Billy-Goats got so fat they were scarce able to walk home again; and if the fat hasn't fallen off them, why they're still fat; and so:

Snip, snap, snout
This tale's told out.

Introduction:

1. Vocabulary: troll. Trolls are variously conceived, but generally they are mean-tempered, voracious, immensely strong, and live under bridges or in caves.
2. Do you know any dark places--under your bed, or a dark place in the bushes, where you think witches or trolls might live? Suppose one did live there. What would you do to get rid of it? If you were a billy-goat, what could you do?

Comprehension:

1. How did the first two billy-goats escape the troll?

Drama

Objectives:

To use the body and voice to create a story character.

To work together to dramatize the story.

Introduce: Have you ever been afraid of something even though you know it's not true--like a monster? How do you feel inside when you are afraid? What do you do?

There are some people in a country far away from here--in Norway--who are afraid of a mean, ugly creature called a troll. Does anyone know what a troll might look like? Our story today has a scary, selfish troll in it. Listen and see who is afraid of him.

Read the story.

Plan: Who was afraid of the troll? Why were the goats afraid of him? What did the troll look like? How did he walk? What do you suppose he did under the bridge that made him so mean? Why didn't he want the goats to cross the bridge? What did his voice sound like? Let's try out a mean ugly trolly voice for a minute. Let's hear how the troll would say, "Who's that tripping over my bridge?" (All speak together. Ask them to repeat it, making the sound even uglier.)

Act: Let's see if you can all turn yourselves into mean, ugly trolls with "eyes as big as saucers." Get under your bridge and see what you can do to make yourselves even uglier and meaner.

(One effective way to draw the children out and maintain control is to pretend you are another old troll and go visit some of them to see what they are doing under their bridges and talk about what they plan to do to keep anyone from crossing their bridges. End this sequence by saying something like the following: "Oh, oh, I hear something. I think there is someone coming toward our bridges. Get ready!"

At this point, you can stop the playing and go on with discussion of the next part, as follows, or they can play through the story, with imaginary goats, and you supplying the goat dialogue.)

Plan: It's no wonder the goats were afraid of such mean trolls. What do you suppose the tiny Billy-Goat Gruff thought when he heard what the troll said to him? What did he say? Did he walk slowly over the bridge or quickly? What do you suppose he did when his bigger brother came across? Show me how you think you'd start to walk over the bridge and what you would do when you heard the troll. I'll be the voice of the troll this time. (They all respond at once.)

Was the second Billy-Goat Gruff scared too? What did he say? How did he feel when he got across the bridge?

Then who came? Was he afraid? The story said that the bridge creaked and groaned when he came across. Why? Then they had a fight. How do you suppose we could make it seem as if the big Billy-Goat Gruff and the troll were fighting without their actually touching one another? (Discuss action and reaction responses. They can show what they do when they pretend they have been hit. Explain that an exciting fight is one in which you don't know who is going to win right away. Then let two children try out the fight while the rest watch to see if they can do it without touching.)

Act: (Cast the parts of the goats and troll and play the story through. Discuss what the goats do when the troll has been defeated.

Background music can be used for this story, if you want to. "The Hall of the Mountain King" from Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite is suitable for the entire bridge scene. Practice finding the exciting part of it for the fight itself.)

"East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon" retold by Veronica S. Hutchinson. From Chimney Corner Fairy Tales. New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1926.

Introduction:

Part I

1. Draw a sun and a moon on the blackboard. Alongside this put a simple compass. Ask the class where a place that is "east o' the sun and west o' the moon" would be.

2. Talk about the idea of a "never-never land." We ordinary people rarely can find such a spot. The lassie in this story, however, has to find the place.

Part II

In the first part of the story, the lassie sees the prince leave to marry the princess with a nose three ells long. The lassie must find the land east o' the sun and west o' the moon. Today we'll hear about some of the trouble she has.

Part III

Do you think the North Wind will be able to help the lassie? Let's see.

Comprehension:

Part I

1. What would the White Bear give in trade for the youngest daughter?

2. Where does the White Bear live?

3. How does the lassie discover who the White Bear really is? Would you have been brave enough to creep into that room at night?

4. Why does the prince have to leave?

5. There is a word in our story that many of you may not know. Long ago men measured things in ells. An ell was a measurement made from the shoulder to the wrist. An elbow means a bend in the ell or arm. Today we measure in feet. Originally a foot was the length of an actual "foot." You'll remember that the prince must marry a princess with a nose three ells long. An ell is equal to 37 of our inches, so her nose was 111 inches long! (You might hold up a yardstick to your nose and show that her nose would be almost three times that long.)

Part II

1. What are the three presents the old hags give to the lassie? Do you have any idea why they gave her these things?

2. Does anyone know how to find the land east o' the sun and west o' the moon?

3. What do you think the lassie will try next?

Part III

1. What was the journey to the land east o' the sun and west o' the moon like?

2. How does the lassie use the gifts of the old hags?

3. What is the prince's plan to keep him from marrying the Troll princess? (Explain Troll as a supernatural being, often ugly in appearance, living in caves or underground.)

Drama

Objective:

To use body and voice to create different characters.

Dramatize:

Guide the children to dramatize, or use puppets to dramatize, the last scene where the witches and trolls try to wash the three spots of wax out of the shirt. Questions such as the following will help them visualize the action:

What did the witch and her mother look like? What did the trolls look like?
Did they have nice, soft voices? How did they sound? Try out the way you think they sounded by saying, "Give me that shirt. I'll wash it."
What did they think when the spots grew larger? What did they do? Did they try washing harder? Why were they so anxious to get the shirt clean?
What happened to the shirt when the lassie washed it? What happened to the witches and trolls?

Composition

Objectives:

This activity should help the students

to recall past experiences;

to use vivid expression; and

to think imaginatively.

Activities:

Ask students to name the different ways they can travel from one place to another (walk, run, go by car, plane, etc.). Then have them tell the different ways the girl in the story traveled when she went to look for the Prince (walked, rode a horse, rode on the wind).

Discuss experiences walking in a strong wind:

How does it feel when you walk with the wind?
How does it feel when you walk against the wind?
Can you remember a time when the wind really seemed
to be carrying you along? If so, tell about it.

Ask students to imagine that the strong North Wind took them for a ride just as it did the girl in the story. Ask them to imagine that the wind picked them up as if they were a little piece of paper, carried them high up into the air and didn't put them down for a long, long time. Then have them tell or write a story about their adventure. Where did the North Wind take them? What did they see down below them? How did they feel? What adventures did they have?

THE OLD WOMAN IN THE WOOD

A poor servant-girl was once traveling with the family she served through a great forest, and when they were in the midst of it, robbers came out of the thicket, and murdered all they found. All perished together except the girl, who had jumped out of the carriage in a fright, and hidden herself behind a tree. When the robbers had gone away with their booty, she came out and saw what had happened. Then she began to weep bitterly, and said, "What can a poor girl like me do now? I do not know how to get out of the forest, no human being lives in it, so I must certainly starve." She walked about and looked for a road, but could find none. When it was evening she seated herself under a tree, gave herself into God's keeping, and decided to sit waiting there and not go away, no matter what might happen.

When she had sat there for a while, a white dove came flying to her with a little golden key in its mouth. It put the little key in her hand, and said, "Do you see that great tree, therein is a little lock, it opens with the tiny key; inside the tree you will find food enough, and suffer no more hunger." Then she went to the tree and opened it, and found milk in a little dish, and white bread to break into it, so that she could eat her fill. When she was satisfied, she said, "It is now the time when the hens at home go to roost; I am so tired I could go to bed too." Then the dove flew to her again, and brought another golden key in its bill, and said, "Open that tree there, and you will find a bed." So she opened it, and found a beautiful white bed, and she prayed God to protect her during the night, and lay down and slept. In the morning the dove came for the third time, and again brought a little key, and said, "Open that tree there, and you will find clothes." And when she opened it, she found garments beset with gold and with jewels, more splendid than those of any King's daughter. So she lived there for some time, and the dove came every day and provided her with all she needed, and it was a quiet good life.

Once, however, the dove came and said, "Will you do something for my sake?" "With all my heart," said the girl. Then said the little dove, "I will guide you to a small house; enter it, and inside it, an old woman will be sitting by the fire and will say, 'Good-day.' But on your life give her no answer, let her do what she will, but pass by her on the right side. Further on, there is a door, open it, and you will enter into a room where a quantity of rings of all kinds are lying, among which are some magnificent ones with shining stones. Leave them, however, where they are, and seek out a plain one, which you will find among them, and bring it here to me as quickly as you can."

The girl went to the little house, and came to the door. There sat an old woman who stared when she saw her, and said, "Good day, my child." The girl gave her no answer, and opened the door. "Whither away," cried the old woman, and seized her by the gown, and wanted to hold her fast, saying, "That is my house; no one can go in there if I choose not to allow it." But the girl was silent, got away from her, and went straight into the room.

On the table lay an enormous quantity of rings, which gleamed and glittered before her eyes. She turned them over and looked for the plain one, but could not find it. While she was seeking, she saw the old woman and how she was stealing away, and wanting to get off with a bird-cage which she had in her hand. So she went after her and took the cage out of her hand, and when she raised it up and looked into it, a bird was inside which had the plain ring in its bill. Then she took the ring, and ran quite joyously home with it, and thought the little white dove would come and get the ring, but it did not.

Then she leant against a tree and decided to wait for the dove. And as she stood there, it seemed just as if the tree was soft and bending, and was letting its branches down. And suddenly the branches twined around her, and were two arms, and when she looked round, the tree was a handsome man, who embraced and kissed her heartily, and said, "You have delivered me from the power of the old woman, who is a wicked witch. She had changed me into a tree, and every day for two hours I was a white dove, and as long as she possessed the ring I could not regain my human form." Then his servants and his horses, who had likewise been changed into trees, were freed from the enchantment also, and stood beside him. And he led them forth to his kingdom, for he was a King's son, and they married, and lived happily ever after.

Introduction:

1. Here is a story of a poor serving-girl who is left all alone in the middle of a dark forest. What do you think happened to her? Let's see who can guess the closest.

Comprehension:

1. What was the enchantment the wicked witch put on the handsome prince? There are two parts to it; can you remember what they were?

2. Why do you think the old witch was trying to sneak off with the bird cage?

THE TRAVELING MUSICIANS

A farmer had once a donkey that had been a faithful servant to him a great many years, but now was growing old and every day more and more unfit for work. His master therefore was tired of keeping him and began to think of putting an end to him. But the donkey, who saw that some mischief was in the wind, took himself slyly off and began his journey towards the great city.

"For there," thought he, "I may turn musician."

After he had traveled a little way, he spied a dog lying by the roadside and panting as if he were very tired. "What makes you pant so, my friend?" said the donkey.

"Alas!" said the dog, "my master said he would not keep me because I am old and weak and can no longer make myself useful to him in hunting. So I ran away. But what can I do to earn my living?"

"Oh!" said the donkey, "I am going to the great city to turn musician. Suppose you go with me and try what you can do in the same way?"

The dog said he was willing, and they jogged on together.

Before they had gone far, they saw a cat sitting in the middle of the road and looking very sad.

"Pray, my good lady," said the donkey, "what's the matter with you? You look quite out of spirits!"

"Ah, me!" said the cat, "how can one be in good spirits when one's life is in danger? Because I am beginning to grow old and had rather lie at my ease by the fire than run about the house after mice, my mistress was going to drown me. Though I have been lucky enough to get away from her, I do not know what I am going to do."

"Oh!" said the donkey, "by all means go with us to the great city. You are a good night-singer and may make your fortune as a musician."

The cat was pleased with the thought and joined the party.

Soon afterwards, as they were passing by a farmyard, they saw a cock perched upon a gate, screaming out with all his might and main.

"Well!" said the donkey, "upon my word you make a fine noise. Pray what is all this about?"

"Why," said the cock, "I was just now saying that we should have fine weather for our washing-day. Yet my mistress and the cook don't thank me for my pains, but threaten to cut off my head tomorrow and make broth of me for the guests that are coming on Sunday."

"Well, then," said the donkey, "come with us. It will be better than staying here to have your head cut off! Besides, who knows? If we take care to sing in tune, we may get up some kind of a concert. So come along with us."

"With all my heart," said the cock.

So they all four went on together.

They could not, however, reach the great city the first day. When night came on they went into a wood to sleep. The donkey and the dog laid themselves down under a great tree, and the cat climbed up into the branches; while the cock, thinking that the higher he sat the safer he would be, flew up to the very top of the tree, and then, according to his custom, before he went to sleep, looked out on all sides of him to see that everything was well. In doing this, he saw afar off something bright and shining. Calling to his companions he said, "There must be a house no great way off, for I see a light."

"If that is the case," said the donkey, "we had better change our quarters, for our lodging is not the best in the world!"

"Besides," added the dog, "I should not be the worse for a bone or two, or a bit of meat."

So they walked off together towards the spot where the cock had seen the light. As they drew near, it became larger and brighter, till they at last came close to a house.

The donkey, being the tallest of the company, marched up to the window and peeped in.

"Well, Donkey," said the cock, "what do you see?"

"What do I see?" replied the donkey. "Why, I see a table spread with all kinds of good things, and robbers sitting round it making merry."

"That would be a noble lodging for us," said the cock.

"Yes," said the donkey, "if we could only get in."

So they consulted together how they could get the robbers out, and at last they hit upon a plan. The donkey placed himself upright on his hind legs, with his forefeet resting against the window. The dog got upon his back; the cat scrambled up to the dog's shoulders, and the cock flew up and sat upon the cat's head. When all was ready, a signal was given, and they began their music. The donkey brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed, and the cock crowed. Then they all broke through the window at once and came tumbling into the room, amongst the broken glass, with a most hideous clatter!

The robbers, who had been not a little frightened by the opening concert, had now no doubt that some frightful hobgoblin had broken in upon them, and scampered away as fast as they could.

When the coast was clear, our travelers soon sat down and ate what the robbers had left, with as much eagerness as if they did not expect to eat again for a month. Then they put out the lights and each once more sought out a resting place to his own liking. The donkey laid himself down upon a heap of straw in the yard; the dog stretched himself upon a mat behind the door; the cat rolled herself up on the hearth before the warm ashes; and the cock perched upon the roof of the house. As they were all rather tired from their journey, they soon fell asleep.

About midnight, the robbers saw from afar that the lights were out and that all seemed quiet, so they began to think that they had been in too great a hurry to run away; and one of them, who was bolder than the rest, went to see what was going on. Finding everything still, he marched into the kitchen and groped about till he found a match in order to light a candle; and then, seeing the glittering fiery eyes of the cat, he mistook them for live coals and held the match to them to light it. But the cat, not understanding this joke, sprang at his face, and spit, and scratched him. This frightened him dreadfully, and away he ran to the back door; but there the dog jumped up and bit him in the leg; and as he was crossing over the yard the donkey kicked him; and the cock, who had been awakened by the noise, crowed with all his might.

At this the robber ran back as fast as he could to his comrades and told the captain "how a horrid witch had got into the house, and had spit at him and scratched his face with her long bony fingers; how a man with a knife in his hand had hidden himself behind the door and stabbed him in the leg; how a black monster stood in the yard and struck him with a club, and how a ghost sat upon the top of the house and cried out, 'Throw the rascal up here!'"

After this the robbers never dared to go back to the house; but the musicians were so pleased with their quarters that they took up their home there; and there they are, I dare say, to this very day.

Suggested Activities

Introduction:

Does anyone know what a musician does? (Allow discussion and give examples, if students don't know. Ask part of the group to respond as if they were a donkey singing, another part as if they were a dog singing, and likewise with cat, then cock. Have all of the animals "sing" together.)

What did that concert remind you of? If you heard such music in the middle of the night, what would you do? (Allow time for discussion.)

Now then, listen to the story of the Traveling Musicians and see if you were right.

The Story:

(Read the story for enjoyment. Stop after the paragraph where the robbers "scampered away as fast as they could." Check briefly with the class as to the correctness or incorrectness of their guesses. Finish the story without further interruption.)

The Action:

Who was in this story? Can you name all of the characters? (List them on the chalkboard.) Which one was your favorite character? Why? Which character would you want as a friend? (Allow time for discussion. In groups of six, have the children informally dramatize parts of the story.)

Further Action:

(Have the children make dioramas of scenes from the story out of shoe boxes. Clay figures could be made of the characters. Students could dress as the characters--using construction paper, large paper bags, etc., to make the animals' ears, tails, etc. Story could be acted out as a play for another class.)

Composition

Objectives:

This activity should help the students

to develop and practice sequencing skills;

to practice story-telling.

Procedure:

Review the donkey's journey and where and in what order he came upon each of the other animals. Discuss what the animals might have seen as they walked along the road (rivers? trees? hills? fences?).

Pass out drawing paper and let the students draw maps showing the road from the donkey's farm to the robbers' house as they imagine it. Remind students to show where the dog, the cat, and the cock joined the donkey, and, of course, where the robbers' house was.

When students have finished making their maps, assign partners and let each child tell the story to his partner, following the route on his map with his finger.

SNOW-WHITE

It was the middle of the winter, and the snowflakes were falling like feathers from the sky, and a queen sat at her window working, and her embroidery frame was of ebony. And as she worked, gazing at times out on the snow, she pricked her finger and there fell from it three drops of blood on the snow. When she saw how bright and red it looked, she said to herself, "Oh, that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the embroidery frame!"

Not very long after, she had a daughter, with a skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony, and she was named Snow-White. And when she was born, the queen died..

After a year had gone by the king took another wife, a beautiful woman, but proud and selfish, and she could not bear to be less beautiful than any one else. She had a magic looking glass, and she used to stand before it, and look in it and say,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

And the glass answered,

"You are fairest of them all."

But Snow-White grew more and more beautiful, and when she was seven years old she was as beautiful as day, far more so than the queen herself. One day when the queen went to her glass and said,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

It answered,

"Queen, you are full fair, 'tis true,
But Snow-White is fairer far than you."

This gave the queen a great shock, and she became yellow and green with envy, and from that hour her heart turned against Snow-White, and she hated her. At last she sent for a huntsman, and said, "Take the child into the woods so that I may never set eyes on her again. You must put her to death and bring me her heart so that I know she is dead."

The huntsman led her away, but when he drew his knife to pierce her heart, she began to weep and begged him to spare her life. As she was so lovely, the huntsman had pity on her and said, "Well, run away, poor child."

Wild animals would soon devour her, he thought, and it was as if a stone had rolled away from his heart when he made up his mind not to kill her, but leave her to her fate. He killed a deer for the king's table, but he took the heart of the deer to the queen and said it was Snow-White's. The wicked queen was satisfied.

Now, when Snow-White found herself alone in the woods, she was frightened and began to run, while the animals passed her by without harming her. In the evening she came to a little house and went inside to rest because her little feet would carry her no farther.

Everything was very small, but as pretty and clean as possible. On the table was spread a white cloth, and there were seven knives and forks and drinking cups. By the wall stood seven little beds, covered with clean white quilts. Snow-White, being quite hungry and thirsty, ate a little from each plate, and drank out of each cup. After that she felt so tired that she lay down on one of the beds, but it was too long, and another was too short. At last the seventh was just right and she lay down upon it, said her prayers, and fell asleep.

Presently the masters of the house came in. They were seven dwarfs, who lived among the mountains and searched for gold. When they had lighted their seven candles, they saw that someone must have been in, as everything was not in the same order in which they left it.

The first said, "Who has been sitting in my chair?"

The second said, "Who has been nibbling my bread?"

The third said, "Who has been tasting my porridge?"

The fourth said, "Who has been eating my vegetables?"

The fifth said, "Who has been using my fork?"

The sixth said, "Who has been cutting with my knife?"

The seventh said, "Who has been drinking out of my cup?"

Then the first looked and saw a hollow in his bed and cried, "Who has been lying on my bed?" And the others came running, and everyone cried out that someone had been on his bed too. When the seventh looked at his bed, he saw little Snow-White lying asleep, and he called the others, who came running with their candles to see her.

"Heavens! What a beautiful child?" they cried, but they were careful not to wake her. The seventh dwarf slept an hour at a time with each of his comrades until the night had passed.

When morning came, Snow-White awoke and, seeing the dwarfs, was very frightened, but they were kind and asked her name, and she told them her story. Then the dwarfs said, "If you will keep our house for us, cook, make beds, sew, knit, and keep everything neat and clean, you may stay with us and want for nothing."

"With all my heart," said Snow-White, and she stayed with them and kept all things in order.

In the morning they went to the mountain to dig for gold; in the evening they came home, and their supper was ready for them. All day Snow-White was alone, and the dwarfs warned her, "Beware of the queen, for she will soon learn that you are here. Let no one enter the house."

The queen, thinking that Snow-White was surely dead, came to the mirror and said,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

And the glass answered,

"Queen, you are of beauty rare,
But Snow-White living in the glen
With the seven little men
Is a thousand times more fair."

Then she was angry, for the glass always spoke the truth, and she knew the huntsman had deceived her. At last she thought of a plan. She painted her face and dressed up like an old peddler so no one would know her. In this disguise she went across the mountains to the house of the seven dwarfs.

She knocked at the door and cried, "Fine wares for sale."

Snow-White looked out the window and said, "Good-day, good woman what have you to sell?"

"Good wares, fine wares," she answered, "laces of all colors," and she held up a piece.

"I need not be afraid of letting in this good woman," thought Snow-White, and she unbolted the door and bought the pretty lace.

"What a figure you are, child!" said the old woman. "Come and let me lace your bodice for you properly for once."

Snow-White, suspecting nothing, stood before her, and let her lace her bodice with the new lace; but the old woman laced so quickly and tightly that she took away Snow-White's breath, and she fell down as if she were dead.

"Now I am the fairest," she said to herself as she hurried away.

In the evening the seven dwarfs returned and were horrified to see their dear Snow-White lying on the floor without stirring. When they saw she was laced too tight, they cut the lace, and she began to breathe, and soon came to life again. When the dwarfs heard what had happened, they said that the old peddlar was no other than the wicked queen. "Take care not to let anyone in when we are not here," they said.

When the wicked woman got home, she went to her glass and said,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

As usual it answered,

"Queen, you are of beauty rare,
But Snow-White living in the glen
With the seven little men
Is a thousand times more fair."

When she heard that, she was so struck with surprise that the blood left her heart, for she knew that Snow-White must still be living. "I must plan something different," she said. By means of witchcraft she made a poisoned comb. Then she dressed herself to look like another different sort of old woman.

When she reached the dwarfs' cottage, she knocked and cried out, "Good wares to sell!"

Snow-White looked out and said, "I must not let anybody in."

"But you are not forbidden to look," said the old woman, and she took the poisoned comb and held it up. It pleased the child so that she opened the door.

When the bargain was made, the old woman said, "For once I shall comb your hair properly." Poor Snow-White, thinking no harm, let the old woman have her way, but scarcely was the comb put into her hair than the poison began to work, and the poor girl fell down unconscious.

"Now, you beauty," said the wicked woman, "this is the end of you," and she went away.

Luckily it was near the time when the seven dwarfs came home. When they saw Snow-White lying on the ground as if she were dead they searched till they found the poisoned comb. No sooner had they removed it than Snow-White came to herself and told what had happened. Once more they warned her to be on her guard and to open the door to no one.

The queen went home and stood before her glass and said,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

And the looking-glass answered as before,

"Queen, you are of beauty rare,
But Snow-White living in the glen
With the seven little men
Is a thousand times more fair."

When she heard the glass speak thus, she trembled and shook with anger. "Snow-White shall die," she cried, "even if it cost me my life?" Then she went to a secret room, which no one ever entered but herself, and made a poisoned apple. Outwardly it was beautiful to look upon, pale with rosy cheeks, so that whoever saw it must long for it, but whoever ate even a bite must die. When the apple was ready, she painted her face and dressed like an old peasant woman and went over the mountain to the dwarfs' cottage.

When she knocked at the door, Snow-White put her head out the window and said, "I must not let anyone in; the seven dwarfs told me not to.'

"All right," answered the woman. "I can easily get rid of my apples elsewhere. There, I will give you one."

"No," answered Snow-White, "I dare not take anything."

"Are you afraid of poison?" asked the woman. "Look here, I shall cut the apple in two pieces. You shall have the red side, and I shall keep the pale."

Now the apple was so cunningly made that the red half alone was poisoned. Snow-White longed for the beautiful apple, and as she saw the woman eating a piece, she stretched out her hand and took the poisoned half. Scarcely had she put a piece into her mouth than she fell to the earth as if she were dead.

The queen looked with a fiendish glance, and laughingly cried, "White as snow, red as blood, and black as ebony! This time the dwarfs will not be able to bring you to life again."

And when she got home, she asked the looking glass,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

At last it answered,

"You, queen, are the fairest of them all."

Then her jealous heart was at rest as much as an envious heart can be.

The dwarfs, when they came home in the evening, found Snow-White lying on the ground, and not a breath escaped her lips; she looked quite dead They lifted her up and looked to see if any poison was to be found, unlaced her dress, combed her hair, washed her with wine and water, but it was no use; the poor child was dead. They laid her on a bed, and all seven sat down and wept over her for three days. Then they prepared to bury her, but she looked so fresh and living, and still had such beautiful rosy cheeks, that they said, "We cannot put her in the dark earth."

They made a coffin of clear glass and laid her in it, and wrote her name upon it in letters of gold, and that she was a king's daughter. Then they set the coffin out upon the mountain, and one of them always stayed by and watched it. And the birds came, too, and mourned for Snow-White, first an owl, then a raven, and lastly a dove.

Now Snow-White lay a long time in her coffin, looking as though she were asleep. It happened that a king's son rode through the woods and came to the dwarfs' house to pass the night. He saw the coffin on the mountain and lovely Snow-White inside and read what was written in golden letters. Then he said to the dwarfs, "Let me have the coffin. I will give you whatever you like for it."

But they said, "We will not give it up for all the gold of the world."

At last, however, they had pity on him and gave him the coffin, and the king's son called his servants and bade them carry it away on their shoulders. Now it happened that they stumbled over a bush and the shaking dislodged the poisoned apple from Snow-White's throat. In a short time she opened her eyes, lifted the lid of the coffin, and sat up. "Oh dear! where am I?" she cried.

The prince said, "You are near me," and he told what had happened, and then said, "I love you better than all the world. Come with me to my father's castle and be my wife."

Snow-White consented and went with him, and their wedding was held with great pomp and splendor.

To the feast was invited, among the rest, the wicked queen. When she had dressed herself in her beautiful clothes, she went to her looking glass and asked,

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

The glass answered,

"O queen, although you are of beauty rare,
The young queen is a thousand times more fair."

Then the wicked woman was beside herself with anger and disappointment. First she thought she would not go, but her envy and curiosity were so great she could not help setting out to see the bride. When she came in and recognized Snow-White, she was so filled with terror and rage that she fell down and died. Snow-White and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land for many, many years.

Suggested Activities

Objectives:

To provide enjoyment in listening to and manipulating language.

To develop story-sequencing ability.

Print the following lines on the chalkboard:

"Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is __________ of us all?"

(One at a time, insert "fastest" and "funniest" in blank.)

Read and discuss these two lines with the class and ask for responses as to who is "fastest" and "funniest" at their house (people, cats, dog, etc., accepted).

Ask if anyone knows the story where this question is asked to a magical mirror.

Suggest that in today's story about Snow-White a magical mirror answers the same question over and over for its owner, the queen.
(Read them the question, inserting the word "fairest" in the blank on the board.)
Read the question together.

Alternative:	Have the question prepared (in advance) on tag board you can hold.
Teacher:	As I read the story of Snow-White, we'll read the queen's question to the magical mirror together whenever we come to it. Ready?

The Story:

Read the title. Read the story of Snow-White aloud. Indicate with a hand signal (indicate left-to-right movement) when to read the question in unison. Read through the entire story for enjoyment, without additional comments or interruptions.

The Action:

Teacher:	What was your favorite part of the story? (Allow time for discussion.)
Teacher:	See if you can remember together all of the things that happened in the right order, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.

Next, have all of the children, as a group, recall the order of events together.

Further Action:

Children can draw a picture of their favorite episodes in the story, or act out their favorite episode in twos and threes.

Class can make a mural showing the sequence of events of the story or pin up their pictures in sequence (they could also draw a roller movie the same way).

Follow up:

Make an audio-tape of the story and have the book available for children to read and look at illustrations.

TEENY TINY

A long time ago there lived a teeny tiny woman who lived all by herself in a teeny tiny house in a teeny tiny village. One evening this teeny tiny woman said to her teeny tiny self, "I think I shall take a teeny tiny walk before having my teeny tiny supper." So off she went but she had gone only a teeny tiny way when she came to a teeny tiny gate and this teeny tiny gate opened on to a teeny tiny field. So through this teeny tiny gate the teeny tiny woman went and walked along the teeny tiny hedge of the teeny tiny field. After a teeny tiny while her teeny tiny glance fell upon a teeny tiny bone lying in the teeny tiny field.

"Ah!" she thought to her teeny tiny self, "this teeny tiny bone will be just the very thing for my teeny tiny supper."

So the teeny tiny woman bent down, picked up the teeny tiny bone and put it into the teeny tiny pocket of her teeny tiny coat. Then she walked back to the teeny tiny gate and returned to her teeny tiny house.

She felt a teeny tiny bit tired when she got to her teeny tiny house so instead of making her teeny tiny supper she put the teeny tiny bone into her teeny tiny cupboard and went straight off to her teeny tiny bed.

After a teeny tiny sleep in her teeny tiny bed she woke up because she thought she could hear a teeny tiny voice coming straight from the teeny tiny cupboard. And the teeny tiny voice kept repeating:

"Give me my bone!
Give me my bone!
Give me my bone!"

The teeny tiny woman was just a teeny tiny bit frightened by this teeny tiny voice so she buried her teeny tiny head under the teeny tiny bedclothes and fell asleep again.

But after a teeny tiny while she was awakened once more by the teeny tiny voice crying out:

"Give me my bone!
Give me my bone!
Give me my bone!"

And this time the teeny tiny voice seemed a teeny tiny bit louder than before.

And this made the teeny tiny woman just a teeny tiny bit more frightened, so down went her teeny tiny head once more under the teeny tiny bedclothes.

This time she slept for a teeny tiny bit longer, but when she awoke again the teeny tiny voice had become a teeny tiny bit louder than before and cried out:

"Give me my bone!
Give me my bone!
Give me my bone!"

This time the teeny tiny woman poked her teeny tiny head out from under the teeny tiny bedclothes and said in her loudest teeny tiny voice:

"TAKE IT."

Drama

Objectives:

To bring out in the open the universal fear of strange noises;

To recreate the feeling of being afraid.

Introduce: Have you ever heard noises at night that made you feel afraid? What do you do?

Tell the story: (The story should be told in a gentle voice, to contrast with the big booming voice necessary for the last line.)

Plan: Why was the teeny tiny woman frightened? What did she think was talking to her?

How did she happen to pick up the bone to begin with?

Act: She started out on a teeny tiny walk. Each one of you pretend you're the teeny tiny person who has decided to go on a teeny tiny walk before supper. It's a lovely day. Maybe you'll see some teeny tiny flowers to pick or some teeny tiny birds to watch or something else fun to do on your teeny tiny walk.

(You could play some cheerful, lilting music for background on the walk. Sidecoach as they walk, commenting on the various things they seem to be doing. You can tell them when to notice the bone, if they don't do it on their own.

Continue sidecoaching the action through the story, without the music, while they act it out. For example, "You have had such a nice long walk. You really feel tired. Let's see how you stretch and yawn. Why don't you put your bone in the cupboard and take a teeny tiny nap before you fix your teeny tiny supper?" Etc. You can be the voice from the cupboard, or ask one of the children to be the voice.)

Continue: (After they have all played the story as the teeny tiny woman, they may be intrigued enough to want to decide who the voice was and why it came. Guide them to explore the possibilities: What or who was it? What did it look like? Why did it want its bone back? Have you ever had something of yours taken? How did it make you feel? Where was the creature when the woman picked up the bone? What did it do after the bone was taken?

They act out some of their ideas.)

Composition

Objectives:

The suggested activity should help the students

to realize that some words have the same or similar meanings;

to use variety in speaking and writing.

Write the word tiny on the board and ask students to think of all the words they can that mean the same or nearly the same. Write the words they suggest on the board. Then ask students which animals they think are tiny. Choose one of the tiny animals mentioned and ask students to try to imagine a tiny school for that tiny animal. What would it be like? What furniture would it have? What books? Games? Play equipment?

Go through the list of words on the board again and then have the students retell or write the description of the tiny animal's school substituting one or more of the words on the list for the word tiny each time it appears in the description.

"The Lad Who Went to the North Wind" from East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon by Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen. Evanston: Row, Peterson & Company.

Vocabulary:
"In its stead" - in its place
gruff - rough
morsel - small piece of food

Composition

Objective:

This activity should help students describe foods vividly.

Activities:

Ask students to imagine that the lad in the story loaned them his magic cloth. What good foods would they want to have appear on their table? Have the students describe each food vividly so other members of the class can imagine exactly how it would look and taste.

Pass out paper and ask students to pretend the sheet of paper is the magic cloth. Have them draw their favorite foods on it and write a descriptive phrase beside each dish of food.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

Once upon a time there was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune.

The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him:

"Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house."

Which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it. Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

To which the pig answered:

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

The wolf then answered to that:

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of sticks and said:

"Please, man, give me those sticks to build a house."

Which the man did, and the pig built his house.

Then along came the wolf, and said:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll puff, and I'll huff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and at last he blew the house down, and he ate up the little pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said:

"Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with."

So the man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them. So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could not get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said:

"Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."

"Where?" said the little pig.

"Oh, in Mr. Smith's home-field, and if you will be ready tomorrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together, and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little pig, "I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?"

"Oh, at six o'clock."

Well, the little pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the wolf who came about six. He said:

"Little pig, are you ready?"

The little pig said: "Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner."

The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought he would be up to the little pig somehow or other, so he said:

"Little pig, I know where there is a nice appletree."

"Where?" said the pig.

"Down at Merry-garden," replied the wolf, "and if you will not deceive me I will come for you at five o'clock tomorrow and we will go together and get some apples."

Well, the little pig bustled up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had farther to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much. When the wolf came up he said:

"Little pig, what! are you here before me? Are they nice apples?"

"Yes, very," said the little pig. "I will throw you down one."

And he threw it so far, that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home. The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig:

"Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin this afternoon, will you go?"

"Oh yes," said the pig, "I will go; what time shall you be ready?"

"At three," said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time as usual, and got to the fair and bought a butter-churn, which he was going home with, when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it round, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the little pig's house and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him. Then the little pig said:

"Hah, I frightened you, then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn, and when I saw you, I got into it and rolled down the hill."

Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he would eat up the little pig and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happily ever afterwards.

Vocabulary: Butter-churn - wooden barrel with a paddle wheel inside.

Comprehension:

1. Why couldn't the wolf blow down the third little pig's house?
2. What were the different ways the little pig fooled the wolf?
3. What finally happened to the wicked wolf?

Drama

Objectives:

To practice speaking in character.

To note sequence of events.

Dramatize:

Guide the children to dramatize the portion of the story dealing with the wolf and the third little pig. Discuss how the wolf sounds when he says he'll blow the house down. The whole class can practice this together.

The scenes involved are the initial encounter between the wolf and the third little pig, the scene in the turnip field, the scene in the apple orchard, the scene at the fair, and the concluding scene at the pig's house. The children can work in pairs and all act out the story simultaneously, or a few pairs can do the first scene, a few the second scene, etc. Discuss the action of one scene at a time and then they can act it out. Then discuss the next scene, noting how it is different from the one before it.

THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER

There was once a shoemaker who, through no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had only leather enough left for one pair of shoes. At evening he cut out the shoes which he intended to begin upon the next morning, and since he was a good man, he lay down quietly, said his prayers, and fell asleep.

In the morning, when he had said his prayers, and was getting ready to sit down to work, he found the pair of shoes standing finished on his table. He was amazed, and could not understand it in the least.

He took the shoes in his hand to look at them more closely. They were so neatly sewn that not a stitch was out of place, and were as good as the work of a master-shoemaker.

Soon after a customer came in, and as he was much pleased with the shoes, he paid more than the ordinary price for them, so that the shoemaker was able to buy leather for two pairs of shoes with the money.

He cut them out in the evening, and next day, with fresh courage was about to go to work; but he had no need to, for when he got up, the shoes were finished, and buyers were not lacking. These gave him so much money that he was able to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

Early next morning he found the four pairs finished, and so it went on; what he cut out at evening was finished in the morning, so that he soon again had all he needed and became a well-to-do man.

Now it happened one evening, not long before Christmas, when he had cut out shoes as usual, that he said to his wife: "How would it be if we were to sit up tonight, to see who it is that lends us such a helping hand?"

The wife agreed, lighted a candle, and they hid themselves in the corner of the room behind the clothes which were hanging there.

At midnight came two little naked men who sat down at the shoemaker's table, took up the cut-out work and began with their tiny fingers to stitch, sew, and hammer so neatly and quickly, that the shoemaker could not believe his eyes. They did not stop till everything was quite finished, and stood complete on the table; then they ran swiftly away.

The next day the wife said: "The little men have made us rich, and we ought to show our gratitude. They ran about with nothing on, and must freeze with cold. Now I will make them little shirts, coats, waistcoats, and stockings, and will even knit them a pair of shoes."

The husband agreed, and at evening, when they had everything ready, they laid out the presents on the table, and hid themselves to see how the little men would behave.

At midnight they came skipping in, and were about to set to work; but, instead of the leather ready cut out, they found the little clothes.

At first they were surprised, then delighted. With the greatest speed they put on and smoothed down the pretty clothes, singing:

"Now we're boys so fine and neat,
Why cobble more for others' feet?"

Then they hopped and danced about, and leapt over chairs and tables and out at the door. From that time on, they came back no more, but the shoemaker did well as long as he lived, and had good luck in everything.

Introduction:

1. Have you ever gotten up in the morning and found a surprise just for you?
2. Did you know where the surprise came from?
3. In the story you will hear today, a poor shoemaker woke up one morning and found a very special surprise, a surprise that changed his whole life.

Comprehension:

1. Why did the shoemaker cut out only one pair of shoes the first night?
2. What was the surprise that the shoemaker found?
3. How did he and his wife discover who had brought the surprise?
4. Would you have tried to find out who had made the shoes? Why or why not?
5. Why did the Elves run away and not come back?

Drama

Objective:

To demonstrate awareness of the satisfaction that can be gained by helping others.

Introduce:

Do you like it when somebody has a nice surprise for you?

Have you ever planned a nice surprise for someone else?

Can you think of something to do at your house that would be a nice surprise for your mother? (Instead of listening to what they would do, guide them to act out their ideas. Point out that they must be very quiet about it so their mothers won't hear. You can let them all act out their ideas simultaneously or let half act while half watch to find out how many different surprises they see.)

Tell them that today's story is about some little people who just loved to surprise others.

"The Big Turnip" from Children's Literature for Dramatization by Geraldine Brain Siks. New York: Harper and Row.

Vocabulary: budge - move

Drama

(Note: This story dramatization will probably take two sessions.)

Objective:

To understand the importance of teamwork.

Warm-up:

1. (The purpose is to stimulate the imagination and to introduce the idea of people pulling together.

Tell the class you have a basket of ropes (imaginary) with a rope in it for everyone. As soon as each child gets his rope, he is to use it in some way. See how many different things can be done with a rope. If they wish to do something with a rope that takes more than one person, they may.

Someone is sure to lasso a lion, or something else very strong and hard to pull, or someone may even start a tug of war. Look for actions in which you can suggest that others join in to help, noting how they really need to use their strength to pull together.

2. (Purpose is to calm them down to get ready to listen to the story.) Have you ever planted seeds? What do you have to do? Show me how carefully you get the ground ready and what you do after the seed is in. (Let them act out this quiet action for a moment.) After you plant the seed, what do you like to do during the days afterward? (Watch it grow.)

Present the story:

(While you tell the story, the children may enjoy joining in on some of the repetitive parts and also pantomiming the pulling of the turnip.)

Plan and Act:

1. (Try to get them on their feet and acting as soon as possible, with minimum planning.)

How big did the turnip grow? How could we use ourselves to be turnips that won't budge and will be bigger than Grandpa? If some of you can think of a way to do it together, you may try. (You can be Grandpa planting the seeds, going inside, and then coming out to look at the turnip seeds after the rain. The seeds, of course, grow before your very eyes.)

2. What did Grandpa do when he said how big the turnip was getting? What did Grandpa and Grandma do? Who did they call? Then they all pulled--each from a different direction. What happened?

(You can either have one set of players for the three characters, or the boys can all be Grandpas, the girls can be in the house, and respond as Grandmas or Katrinkas. After this playing would be an appropriate time to break the session, if you wish, to be continued the next day.)

Whom did Katrinka call next? How does the dog move? (Briefly explore the movement variations of the animals in the story by having the children act them out.

Cast the various characters, asking which boy knows just how Grandfather felt when he saw the turnip growing so big. Continue in the same vein with the other characters. Maybe two or three children would like to work together to create the big turnip. You may need to discuss how the characters can make it seem as if they are pulling the turnip as hard as they can, without actually pulling.

Those not specifically cast could be normal-sized turnips and vegetables planted by Grandpa in the garden. How do they feel when they see the big turnip and what happens to it?

At the end of the play, suggest that Katrinka bring over a big basket with surprises for all. Each character can reach in the basket to get a surprise that would be just right for him.)

Composition

Objectives:

This activity should help the students

to think imaginatively; and

to empathize with story characters.

Activities:

Option 1. Discuss possible good surprises for each character in the story.

Have students divide a large sheet of drawing paper into six squares of approximately the same size. This may be done by folding or using a ruler. Draw one of the characters from the story in each square and show him holding his surprise. Encourage students to try to think of something that wasn't mentioned in the group discussion if they can.

Option 2. Ask students to think how Mishka, the little field mouse, must have felt when Katrinka called her and she saw the dog and cat out by the big turnip with the family.

Did she understand what they wanted her for?
Had she ever been asked to help before?
Was she afraid?
What other things might she have thought of doing instead of going
to help them?

Have students pretend they are Mishka and tell or write the thoughts that go through her mind when Katrinka calls her. Suggest that they speak or write as if they were talking to themselves.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Part I

There was once a miller named Hans. He lived with his daughter in an old millhouse by a pleasant, babbling brook in the Happy Valley. Every harvest season, the farmers in the valley brought their grain to Hans, and with his millstone he ground it into fine white flour. The flour was so white and so fine that Hans was soon known far and wide as the best miller in the entire valley. This pleased him very much, for he was a man who liked to be important in the eyes of his neighbors.

Next to his good name, the miller was most proud of his daughter, whose name was Marian. She was a plump, good-natured girl, who liked to sing while she did her household chores. In the evenings, the farmers' sons liked to come to the miller's house and sit by the hearth while Marian worked at her spinning wheel. They admired her rosy cheeks and golden hair, and the way the thread she spun danced in the firelight. On such evenings, Hans would sit in the corner and smoke his pipe and think that the world was indeed a pleasant place.

One day the king of the Happy Valley decided to have a great feast. He wanted to serve the guests at his banquet the whitest, fluffiest bread that could be baked. Hearing of the fine flour made by Hans, he ordered the miller to be brought before him.

When he came before the king, the frightened miller bowed his head to the floor.

"Hans," the king said, "I have been told that your flour is the finest in my kingdom."

The miller, suddenly feeling his importance, replied, "Yes, Your Highness, my flour indeed is the best in your kingdom. And if I may say so," he added, puffing out his chest a little, "it is probably better than any other flour in the whole world."

The king was amused to see the miller puff himself up this way, so he decided to tease him a little. "Well, Hans, but is it only your flour that has made you so wealthy? I notice you are wearing a very fine vest--is your business so good that you can dress like a prince?"

The miller's face grew red with pleasure. Wishing to look important in the king's eyes, he leaned forward and whispered, "Well, Your Highness, there is something unknown to all my neighbors in the Happy Valley, something which I will tell to you alone. I have a daughter who can spin straw into gold!"

"Gold, you say?" said the king. "I don't believe it! Still, if what you say is true, she would be of great value to me. Your daughter must be very, very clever. Bring her to the castle tomorrow so I can see a sample of her work."

Hans cursed himself for being so foolish. He knew his daughter was an expert at the spinning wheel, but no one could spin straw into gold. Yet, he could not admit to the king that he had lied. So the next morning, he appeared before the king, with a very frightened young girl at his side.

The king took Marian into a room in the dungeon deep underneath the castle, where there was a great pile of straw in one corner. He showed her a spinning wheel and a spindle, and said, "Marian, I will give you all night to spin this straw into gold. If you have not finished by morning, you shall die." And he shut the great wooden door, looked at her once through the thick iron bars, and then left her there alone.

Poor Marian wept and wrung her hands. "Oh dear," she wailed, "what am I to do to save my life?" She had no idea how to spin straw into gold. She tried to spin some straws on the wheel, but they split into tiny pieces. So she wept and wept as the night went on, growing more afraid with every minute. Finally, she fell on the floor in a faint.

Marian was awakened from her faint by a tap on the shoulder. Standing before her was a little man with spindly legs, a long pointed nose, and eyes bright as black beads.

"Good evening, miller's daughter," said the funny little creature. "What is the matter?" he asked, looking at her tear-stained face.

"Oh, I am in terrible trouble. The king has told me I must spin this straw into gold or I will die. And I don't know the first thing about how to do it."

The little man's eyes twinkled strangely. "What will you give me if I spin it for you?"

"Why, I have nothing to give," Marian answered at once. Then, remembering, she said, "Oh, there is my pearl necklace. I will give it to you if you will spin this straw for me."

Marian took the string of pearls from her neck and gave it to the man. But she did it sadly, for the necklace had been given to her by her father when she was a little girl, and she was very fond of it.

The dwarf sat down at the spinning wheel. Whirr, whirr, whirr! The wheel went around three times and the bobbin was full. Then he took up another bobbin and whirr, whirr, whirr! three times around and that was full. He spun all night long, till all the straw was gone. And the thread that was wound on the bobbins was the finest, purest gold. He finished just at sunrise, jumped up from the stool, waved his cap at Marian, and vanished.

Soon the king came along. When he saw the great piles of golden thread glowing in the dim dungeon room, he was astonished and very, very happy, for he was a king who dearly loved riches. At the sight of this treasure, he became even more greedy.

"This work was well done, Marian," he said. "But I have still more use for you." He took the poor girl into another room, bigger than the first, and this room was filled halfway to the ceiling with straw. He told Marian that if she valued her life she must spin all the straw into gold before morning. Then he locked her in as he had done the night before.

Marian saw that things were worse than before. Here was even more straw, and of course, she still had no idea how to spin it into gold. Sadly she waited for the morning, when she was sure she would be put to death.

Suddenly out of a puff of smoke appeared the strange little man who had helped her the previous night. Jumping up and down in excitement, he said, "Marian, can it be that you have been given another little spinning job to do? Now, what will you give me if I spin all this straw--and there is such a lot of it!--into gold?"

"I gave you my necklace last night. Tonight, I will give you the most precious thing I have. This ring belonged to my mother and to her mother before her. If you save my life again, this ring shall be yours."

The little man looked longingly at the ring, which had a great orange stone on it. The stone gleamed on the girl's finger. Then he sat down on the stool. Whirr, whirr, whirr! went the wheel, once, twice, thrice, indeed many times as the long night passed. And by morning all the straw was spun into gold. Silently Marian slipped the ring with the orange stone from her finger and handed it to the little man. He held his nose, jumped once into the air, and vanished, just as the king opened the door.

The king shouted with joy when he beheld so much golden thread. Most people would have been satisfied, but not the king. It seemed he could never have enough gold. He took the miller's daughter into a room even bigger than the other two. It was a long banquet hall, and it was filled up to the ceiling with huge bales of straw. There was so much straw that it seemed about to tumble down on their heads as they opened the door.

The cruel king pushed Marian into the one tiny corner of the room which was not covered with straw. "This too must be spun in one night," he said. "And if you are successful this time, I shall make you my wife. If not, you know what will happen to you." He thought to himself, "Even though she is only a miller's daughter, I could hardly find anyone more wealthy in my whole kingdom."

The king had hardly gone when the little man appeared for the third time and said, "What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time?"

Marian answered, "Alas, I have nothing left to give. I am only a miller's daughter, and I have already given you the only two treasures I had in the world. I am surely lost. The king will not marry me; he will kill me instead."

The dwarf paced around the tiny open space in the room, holding his hand to his forehead. Finally he said, "I have it! If I spin this huge pile of straw into gold, you must promise to give me the first child you have after you are married to the king."

Marian could not really believe that she would ever become queen, and because her life was in danger, she promised the little man what he asked for. The dwarf sat down and worked rapidly all through the night, and spun all the straw into gold. In the morning when the king came and found that his wish had been fulfilled, he ordered a giant wedding celebration to be prepared. Before the week was over, the miller's daughter became a queen.

Part II

Marian forgot all her troubles in her new glory, and her father the miller was now as important in his neighbors' eyes as even he could have wished. He hired two boys to grind his flour, for he now thought that such simple work was beneath him.

Life went along very happily for a year or so, and then one day the news spread throughout the Happy Valley that the queen had given birth to a fine, healthy boy. Everyone rejoiced. There was feasting and dancing in the villages, and the farmers gave up their work in the fields to join in the fun. The miller was so proud to be a grandfather that he gave away free sacks of flour to everyone.

One day not long after the prince was born, Queen Marian was sitting in her chamber rocking the child, when there was a soft tap on the door. In walked the man who had spun the straw into gold. The queen was so shocked she could not speak, for she had long ago forgotten the dwarf and her promise to him.

He stood firmly before the queen and said, "Now you must give me what you promised me."

Marian was terrified. "Oh please," she said, "I will give you anything if you will forget the promise--I will give you all the riches of the kingdom, but please let me keep my child." And she clutched the baby close to her breast, so tightly that it began to wail.

But the dwarf would not change his mind. "No, I want the child. I would rather have something living than all the riches you can offer me. I am an old man and I have grown lonely. I want the child to keep me company. You promised him to me when your life was in danger. Now give him to me."

The queen began to weep so loud and so piteously that the little man put his hands to his ears and screwed his eyes shut. Finally, he said, "I will strike yet another bargain with you, even though you do not deserve it. I will give you three days to find out what my name is. If by the end of that time you cannot tell me what it is, you must give up the child to me." Since he was sure he would win in the end, he patted the wailing child on the head and then disappeared.

The queen called in her waiting women, and they all sat up the whole night thinking of every name they had ever heard. Each time someone thought of another name, a servant would write it down. Soon the list was so long that all the paper in the castle had been used up, and the servant had to write the names on the walls.

When the little man appeared the next day, the queen read off all the names, beginning Abdullah, Bertram, Caspar, David, and so on down to Xavier, Youssef, and Zachary. It took a long time to get through all the names, but it was useless, for after each one the little man said,

"That is not my name."

The second day, the queen sent a messenger around the kingdom to find out what the names of all the people were. And when the little man appeared, she told him all the most unusual names the messenger had brought back.

"Perhaps you are called Roast-ribs, or Sheep-shanks, or Spindleshanks," she asked hopefully.

But the little man answered only, "That is not my name."

"Could you be Cutpurse, or Cabbage-curls, or Canker-face?"

But he only answered again, "That is not my name."

The queen had used all the names she knew. She was in a great fury. She threw her shoe at the little man, but he cackled wickedly and disappeared in a puff of smoke.

On the third day, the messenger was sent out again, even though it seemed that all the names in the Happy Valley had already been found and written down. The queen paced back and forth in her chamber, very upset. Now and then she would pick up her darling child and press him close, thinking she would surely die if she had to give him up.

Finally the messenger returned. He was worn out, for he had traveled all day without food or rest. "Dear Queen," he said, "I have passed all over the land, and all I have been able to find is one single new name. But I found it in a very strange way. I was struggling through a tangled patch of woods when I came to a high hill, and there was a little cottage standing on it, and in front of the cottage there was a fire burning. I came closer, and I saw a funny little fellow with a very pointed nose dancing around the fire. He kept hopping up and down on one leg and singing,

Monday I baked, Tuesday I made stew
Today is the day that the child comes through.
And oh I am pleased at how clever I've been,
For nobody knows I am called Rumplestiltskin!

A great smile spread over the face of the queen. She gave the messenger a sack filled with gold. Soon afterwards, the little man appeared, dressed in a rich red velvet suit, as though he were going to a party.

"Now, Mrs. Queen," he said, "for the last time--what is my name?"

"Are you called Johnny?" she said.

"No."

"Is your name Harry?"

"No again."

The queen walked up to the dwarf and smiled down triumphantly. "Then perhaps your name is RUMPLESTILTSKIN!"

The dwarf screamed in anger. "Who told you that? The devil must have told you that!" He jumped up and down like a bouncing ball, waving his arms and sputtering. He jumped so hard that one of his legs went into the floor all the way to the knee. Then he stamped his other foot in such a fury that he split in two, and suddenly there was no more of him to be seen.

The queen was overjoyed. She picked up the baby prince and danced around the room, and as she danced she sang:

Oh now I have won my beautiful child
From the dwarf so mean and sly.
And I think you have spun your last golden thread,
Goodbye, Rumplestiltskin, goodbye!

Introduction:

Part I

1. Vocabulary: millstone, spindle, bobbin
2. Do you know how thread is made from wool? Do you know how grain is ground to make flour? (Discuss the pre-industrial aspects of such activities; no need to go into great detail.)
3. Have you ever made a boast and then been made to try to live up to it?

Part II

1. Where did we leave off the story?
2. What do you think will happen now?

Comprehension:

Part I

1. What boast did the miller make? What happened as a result of his boast?
2. What three bargains did the king make with Marian? What three bargains did Marian make with the dwarf?
3. What happens to Marian at the end of this section?

Part II

1. What bargain does the little man make with the queen this time?
2. How does she learn Rumplestilkskin's name?
3. What finally happens to him?